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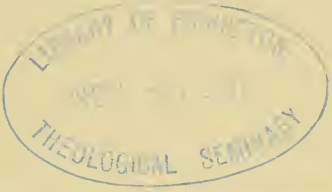
Hosea



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HOSEA,

WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTION

BY

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PREFACE
BY THE GENERAL EDITOR.

THE General Editor of *The Cambridge Bible for Schools* thinks it right to say that he does not hold himself responsible either for the interpretation of particular passages which the Editors of the several Books have adopted, or for any opinion on points of doctrine that they may have expressed. In the New Testament more especially questions arise of the deepest theological import, on which the ablest and most conscientious interpreters have differed and always will differ. His aim has been in all such cases to leave each Contributor to the unfettered exercise of his own judgment, only taking care that mere controversy should as far as possible be avoided. He has contented himself chiefly with a careful revision of the notes, with pointing out omissions, with

suggesting occasionally a reconsideration of some question, or a fuller treatment of difficult passages, and the like.

Beyond this he has not attempted to interfere, feeling it better that each Commentary should have its own individual character, and being convinced that freshness and variety of treatment are more than a compensation for any lack of uniformity in the Series.

DEANERY, PETERBOROUGH.

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*** The Text adopted in this Edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*. A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed. For the principles adopted by Dr Scrivener as regards the printing of the Text see his Introduction to the *Paragraph Bible*, published by the Cambridge University Press.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

The Prophet's name and origin.—His period and its characteristics.

THE Book of Hosea stands first among the writings of the 'Minor Prophets', not because it was thought to be the earliest (for of this there is no proof), but because it is the longest. Joel (at least according to the ordinary opinion) and Amos are both prior in time to Hosea, and Amos in particular ought to be very carefully compared with the subject of our present study. Hosea indeed is throughout enigmatical and obscure compared with Amos, partly from the peculiarities of his style, partly from the want of such illustrative details as those with which we have been supplied by his predecessor (Am. vii. 10—17). The prophet's name is one specially characteristic of Northern Israel; it was borne by the last king of the Ten Tribes (2 Kings xv. 30), and also originally by Joshua (Num. xiii. 8, 16; Deut. xxxii. 44). True, the prophet appears in Auth. Vers. as Hosea, but there is no difference between the names of the three persons in the Hebrew. The form in our Bibles was suggested by the Osee of the Septuagint and the Vulgate; St Jerome bears witness that even in his time there was no distinction between the letters Sin and Shin. It is St Jerome again who informs us (see his note on i. 1) that in some Greek and Latin MSS. the name of the prophet was written Ause, which reminds us of the form which the name assumes in the Assyrian inscriptions—Ausi'. Nothing is known of the prophet's father Beēri; it was a Jewish fancy that

he too was a prophet, and verses 19, 20 of Isa. viii. (see Delitzsch's note) were even declared to be words of Beëri which had intruded into the text of Isaiah[1]. That Hosea was *a native of the northern kingdom* needs no proof to any one who has read his book. Without laying any stress on occasional Aramaisms, or on the phrase 'our king' in vii. 5, which is probably enough a popular phrase taken up half-satirically by the prophet, it would seem that the flow of sympathy towards the Israelites, the intimate knowledge of their circumstances, the topographical[2] and historical allusions, point unmistakably to one born and bred in the northern state. How different is the superficial though not untruthful survey of things and people given by a mere visitor from Judah—the prophet Amos! In addition to this, consider Hosea's apparent familiarity with the great love-poem of Northern Israel, which is of course not counterbalanced by his probable knowledge of the Book of Amos[3]—a Judahite prophet, but commissioned to prophesy to Israel (vii. 15). A subtler argument in favour of the same view may be derived from the tone of Hosea's religion, which is on the whole both warmer and more joyous (see especially chaps. ii. and xiv.) than that which prevails in the great Judahite prophets. Hosea seems indeed to have been affected by the genial moods of nature in the north, and to have partaken of that expansive, childlike character, which as a matter of fact led his country-people astray, but which might have issued in loving obedience to the God of love.

We have taken some pains to prove the Israelitish origin of the prophet, because it is this which gives his book such a high historical importance. There is very much to interest us in that northern people of which we have for the most part such fragmentary and indirect notices. It embraced the larger part of the old Israelitish community, and, sad as were the final

[1] It need hardly be said that there is no inconsistency of style between these two verses and those which precede and follow to justify the theory of interpolation.

[2] See v. 1, vi. 8, 9, xii. 11, xiv. 5, 6.

[3] On both points, see end of Introduction.

results of its struggle for independence, the struggle itself was from a secular point of view not merely excusable but inevitable. Nor can we doubt that, if we knew more at first hand respecting the north-Israelitish kingdom, we should find much to sympathize with even morally, and many germs of good which might have developed into lovely 'plants of Jehovah.' Elijah is hardly a full representative of Israel's moral capacities. His character could not help being affected by his origin. He was a Gileadite[1], a fellow-tribesman perhaps of those Gadites of David 'whose faces were like the faces of lions', and who were 'as swift as the roes upon the mountains' (1 Chron. xii. 8), and of those 'fifty men of the Gileadites' who captured and slew Pekahiah in his royal fortress (2 Kings xv. 25). Very different is Hosea, and the difference is reflected in his character, which again is partly accounted for by his origin. That one of so typically Israelitish a nature, and so full of love for his northern home, should have taken such a hopeless view of the prospects of the state, seems proof enough of the deadly corruption which prevailed. As Stanley has said[2], he was the Jeremiah of Israel; no wonder therefore that he met Jeremiah's fate of opposition and contempt[3] (ix. 7, 8, comp. Jer. xxix. 26, 27).

Hosea, then, was the prophet of the decline and fall of Israel; so much indeed is clear from a glance at his book. But did he prophesy during the whole of this sad period? It is not by any means inconceivable, according to our chronological table, but we are bound to test the view by internal evidence. First of all, there is the heading (i. 1), which states that Hosea received divine revelations 'in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.' The natural inference would be that these two historical periods synchronized. But if anything is certain in Biblical history, it is that Jeroboam II. of Israel died before his contemporary Uzziah or Azariah of

[1] 'Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbeh in Gilead', 1 Kings xvii. 1 (Ewald and Thenius, following the Septuagint and Josephus).

[2] *Lectures on the Jewish Church*, ii. 369.

[3] It was the fate of Amos, too, in Hosea's own country (Am. vii. 10—13).

Judah. We need not however accuse the author of the heading of an error in calculation; the heading is probably a thoughtless combination of two distinct traditions or views which do not refer to the same amount of prophetic writing. That the first three chapters, which form a whole in themselves, were written in the reign of Jeroboam II., is sufficiently clear from internal evidence. The ruin of the house of Jehu is still future in chap. i. (see ver. 4), and the picture of the prosperous condition of Israel given in chap. ii. agrees with no admissible period but that of Jeroboam II. Hence the first part of the heading may reasonably be presumed to have been originally prefixed to the small prophetic roll containing chaps. i.—iii.

As for the second part, it was doubtless intended to refer to the complete book of Hosea; the author of it however is not to be taken quite at his word. The fact that the book of Isaiah (or shall we say, Isa. i.—xxxix.?) is preceded by a heading which mentions the same four kings of Judah, suggests that one and the same editor wrote the heading of Isaiah and the latter part of that of Hosea. Now it may be assumed as practically certain that the former heading (or at any rate the chronological part of it) was the work of a scribe during the Exile, so that this late editor probably only knew in a vague way that Isaiah and Hosea were more or less contemporary. Micah he thought (for we can hardly doubt that he also wrote Mic. i. 1) was a little junior to those two, and so he left out 'Uzziah' in the heading of Micah's book. In the case of Micah we have seen already that internal evidence does not bear out a strict interpretation of the heading, and it will be easy to prove the same in the case of Hosea. It is true that 'Shalman' is referred to in x. 14, and that Dr Pusey and Mr Bosanquet have identified this name with Shalmaneser, but we shall see later on how groundless this view is; true, further, that King Hoshea formed political relations with Egypt such as are referred to in vii. 11, xii. 1, but a party friendly to Egypt must from the nature of the case have existed before Hoshea's reign; true, lastly, that x. 5, 6, xiii. 16 contain detailed predictions of an Assyrian conquest which have been supposed[1] to

[1] Prebendary Huxtable, *Speaker's Commentary*, Vol. VI. p. 405.

indicate that the events foretold were on the point of taking place, but the expressions could just as well have been used under Pekah or Menahem as under Hoshea, and xiv. 3 shows that when the latter chapters were written the Jews had not finally broken with Assyria. The reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah seem therefore to be out of the question as periods for any part of Hosea. There remains, as a possible date for chaps. iv.—xiv., the reign of Jotham, who was contemporary with Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, and Pekahiah, and perhaps for two or three years with Pekah. Many have thought that the difficult passage viii. 10 refers to the tribute which Menahem paid to Tiglath-Pileser[1] (2 Kings xv. 19 mentions him by his private name Pul), but the Hebrew text probably needs correction.

It is at any rate certain that the picture described in chaps. iv.—xiv. is one of alarming national decline both in the moral and in the political sphere. In chap. ii. the prophet had severely reprimanded the Israelites for confounding Jehovah with the Canaanitish Baalim (see on ii. 16, 17), but he says nothing of that fearful moral corruption which in the later chapters he sees to be eating away the life of the nation. Why this is the case, is uncertain: it would be hazardous to assume that the corruption did not in some degree exist. If Hosea did not at once depict it in its true colours, we may conjecturally ascribe this either to the hopefulness of youth, or to the circumstance that the people of the district from which he sprang were comparatively pure in their morals, owing perhaps to their remoteness from the great centres of a debasing worship. Can we support this latter theory by external evidence? It seems that we can with at least a reasonable degree of certitude. We need not dogmatize here as to the composition of that exquisite love-poem the Song of Songs, but we may at any rate be allowed to hold that the most characteristic portions of it are monuments of the reign of Jeroboam II. If so, it is evident that the rustic beauties of N. Israel not only had external attractions, but also the 'gentlest and

[1] Tiglath-Pileser mentions Raṣunnu (Rezin) of Damascus and Minikhimmi (Menahem) of Samaria among his tributaries in the eighth year of his reign, B.C. 738 (Schrader).

noblest' womanly virtues[1]. The generally admitted fact that the Book of Hosea contains reminiscences of the Song of Songs suggests that a change had passed over Israel since that poem (or some portion of it) was written, otherwise the prophet would clearly stand self-convicted of exaggeration. We may perhaps ascribe this change in part to the removal of the vigorous statesman upon the throne, who must surely have recognized the political importance of preserving intact the moral foundations of the state :—it is of Jeroboam's upstart successors that the prophet complains that they took pleasure in wickedness, and shared in the licentiousness of their people (vii. 3, 4). And no wonder that they did so, when, as in the decline of the Roman state, rough 'pretorians' seized and gave away the crown[2]. Could it be otherwise, when the tone of society was set by the coarsest and most lawless natures? Such was not a period in which many women like the Shulamite or men like the prophet Hosea could be expected to arise. Add to this, that the priests found it their interest to encourage vice and sensuality (iv. 6—8), and what further need have we of witnesses to the inner necessity of the speedy downfall of a self-betrayed state?

The concluding years of the reign of Jotham saw the formation of an alliance between Rezin king of Syria and Pekah king of Israel, based on the importance of opposing a firm front to the aggressions of Assyria. They needed the support of Judah, but Jotham, perhaps from religious motives, held back. Hosea makes no allusion to the Syro-Israelitish inroads which led up to the great invasion described in Isa. vii. The inroads he might have passed over in silence, but scarcely the invasion. A reunion of north and south was a part of his most cherished ideal (i. 11), but such a reunion as was now threatened he could not but denounce as prematurely involving Judah in the fate of her apostate sister. From his not mentioning it, it is plain that he was no longer prophesying, and it is for a similar reason plain that no part of his book was written as late as the inva-

[1] Delitzsch, *Canticles and Ecclesiastes*, E. T., p. 5.
[2] See Heilprin, *Historical Poetry of the Ancient Hebrews*, ii. 118.

sion of Gilead[1] and Naphtali by Tiglath-Pileser. It is a satisfaction to believe that such a devoted patriot (if the word be allowable) had closed his eyes before this 'beginning of pangs'—this first fulfilment of his reluctant threatenings.

CHAPTER II.

Hosea's domestic history.—Parable or fact?—Chap. ii. alone an allegory.

At the opening of this essay, a regret was expressed that we had no such illustrative details respecting Hosea as in the case of Amos. We have in fact no information as to his outward circumstances, or as to his intercourse with the different classes in the state. But we do know a series of domestic events which Hosea himself viewed as interpretative of God's purposes for him, and as conveying to him a clearly defined mission. The prophet has himself lifted the veil from his home life, and the sad story is briefly this. In the reign of Jeroboam II., when the nation was already on the down-hill road to moral ruin, Hosea married a wife named Gomer. He hoped the best of her, there is no reason to think otherwise; but she proved unworthy of his trust. Whether her profligacy showed itself in simple adultery, or in her following the licentious rites of the consort of the Canaanitish Baal (Ashérah)[2], we know not. But such was

[1] In fact, Gilead is repeatedly referred to as a part of N. Israel (see v. 1, vi. 8, xii. 11).

[2] As Dean Plumptre well remarks (*Lazarus and other Poems*, p. 209), 'The two sins of idolatry and sensual licence were closely intertwined.... It would be hardly too much to say that every harlot in Israel was probably a votary of the goddess' (see on iv. 13, 14). Ashérah (transformed by Auth. Vers. into 'grove') was, as most think, the name of a Canaanitish goddess, though some scholars prefer to regard the word as a noun meaning 'pole', the sacred tree being represented by a pole on or near the altar. In any case the goddess had such an artificial tree or symbol of a tree erected near her altars. Those who take Ashérah to be the name of a goddess refer to the Assyrian *âsir*, fem. *âsirat* 'favourable', whence also probably the name Asher (a divine

Hosea's love for his wife, and such perhaps his hope of reclaiming her, that he took no legal step against her, and acknowledged her three children for his own. At last, however, Gomer fled away to her paramour, but even then Hosea's love followed her. He found her, as it would seem, already despised and shamed; perhaps her paramour had grown weary of her, and brutally sold her for a slave. At any rate, Hosea had to buy her back for the price of a slave,—

> "weeping blinding tears,
> I took her to myself, and paid the price
> (Strange contrast to the dowry of her youth
> When first I wooed her); and she came again
> To dwell beneath my roof. Yet not for me
> The tender hopes of those departed years,
> And not for her the freedom and the love
> I then bestowed so freely. Sterner rule
> Is needed now. In silence and alone,
> In shame and sorrow, wailing, fast, and prayer,
> She must blot out the stains that made her life
> One long pollution[1]."

Such is the story told us in the first and third chapters. There is no attempt to soften the colouring by half-tints; 'rough fresco-strokes,' to adopt Ewald's phrase, seemed perhaps more effective. Besides, it would have led some to accuse Hosea of egotism, a fault from which a prophetic writer must be conspicuously free, if he had lavished his artistic power on his own tragic history. The student is, however, much indebted to Dean Plumptre for his strikingly suggestive poem, a few lines from which are quoted above. A poet as well as an expositor, he

name, like Gad). They also quote passages in which an image of the Ashérah is spoken of (see 1 Kings xv. 13; 2 Chr. xv. 16; 2 Kings xxi. 7), and others in which vessels and tents for the Ashérah are mentioned (2 Kings xxiii. 4); also the famous phrase in 1 Kings xviii. 19, 'the prophets of the Baal and the prophets of the Ashérah.' This is quite consistent with the occasional use of the word for the material symbol of the goddess. It is right to add that Hosea does not mention Ashérah by name: he only alludes to the worship of her (iv. 13). But Amos does not mention either Ashérah or Baal.

[1] Plumptre, *Lazarus* &c., pp. 87—88.

felt that Hosea's poetic imagination was marked by spontaneity and originality. At a later period of Hebrew literature, a fictitious narrative of this kind might be conceivable, but not in the still youthful bloom of lyric poetry, and in the case of so fresh and original a poet as Hosea. We are thus taking a different line from Dr Pusey when he says, 'There is no ground to justify our taking as a parable what Holy Scripture relates as a fact.' There must be some plausible ground for it, or the opinion rejected by Dr Pusey would not have commended itself to the majority of modern commentators. It is not at all a necessary inference from the inspiration of the Scriptures that the events described by Hosea should be historical; it is rather an intuition which comes of itself to the unbiassed reader who has any poetic insight. The only plausible argument on the other side is that Hosea *seems*, when understood literally, to confess to an act which offends our moral consciousness. But had Hosea really meant this, he could have said at once that the bride of his choice had been 'a harlot.' He simply says that she was 'a woman of whoredom', which, according to Hebrew idiom, need only mean 'a woman of an unchaste disposition'; we must suppose that he afterwards found out Gomer to be a woman of the character described (see on i. 2) The inherent difficulties of the parabolic interpretation are much greater than any slight difficulty in the literalistic one adopted by Ewald and Wellhausen in Germany, and by Dr Pusey, Dean Plumptre, and Prof. Robertson Smith in England. It is indeed much to say after Dean Plumptre's poem that there is any difficulty in the literalistic view, and if there be, it is only because the Dean, following Dr Pusey and early Jewish authorities, unfortunately adopts the view that Hosea deliberately married a woman who was, in the later Jewish phrase, 'a sinner,' with the view of reclaiming her.

> 'To seek and save the lost,
> Forgetful of my calling and my fame,
> To call thee mine, and bring thee back to God,
> Became the master-passion of my heart[1].'

[1] Dean Plumptre, *Lazarus* &c., p. 84.

The chief difficulties in the parabolic interpretation are (1) the refractory name Gomer, which refuses to be unlocked by the parabolic key, and contrasts so strongly with the names of the children, and (2) that this interpretation leaves it unexplained how Hosea came to think of Jehovah's relation to Israel as a marriage. With regard to (1), M. Reuss exposes the weakness of his own position by remarking, 'Il est fort probable que ces noms doivent avoir une signification symbolique, comme tous les autres qui vont suivre. Mais nos dictionnaires hébreux n'offrent aucun moyen de la retrouver[1].' And with regard to (2), as the present writer has endeavoured to enforce elsewhere, 'Throughout the Old Testament we detect a gracious proportion between the revelation vouchsafed and the mental state of the person receiving it[2].' But what proportion is there between this new and strange revelation and the mental state of a worshipper of a Deity as moral as Baal and Ashérah were immoral? It was no doubt the custom among the heathen relations of the Israelites, and probably among the semi-heathen Israelites, to speak of the god of heaven as married to the land[3]. But how came Hosea to admit so distinctly heathenish a conception within the circle of the prophetic religious ideas? It is not enough to reply that 'the word of Jehovah came to him:' how could such a 'word' come to him, unless there were already some point of contact for it in his mind? He *must* have been prepared by personal experience to find a moral element in this conception which fitted it for the use of a prophet of Jehovah.

[1] Reuss, *Les prophètes*, i. 138. There is no strangeness in the prophetic names of the children (comp. Isa. vii., viii.), but nothing obliges us to assume that the mother had one too.

[2] *The Book of Isaiah Chronologically Arranged*, p. 22.

[3] It is a remarkable 'survival' of this idea that the cognate word to Baal in Arabic (*ba'l*[u]) means, according to Lane, 'any palm-trees, and other trees, and seed-produce, not watered; or such as are watered by the rain: or palm-trees that imbibe with their roots, and so need not to be watered', in short vegetation which owes nothing to artificial irrigation, and is the direct product of the 'rain from heaven.' See below on ii. 21, 22, and especially Prof. Robertson Smith (*The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 172, 409), who has thrown much fresh light on this part of Hosea.

Why not, then, accept Hosea's statement of his experiences in its literal sense, interpreting his phraseology, however, with due attention to Hebrew idiom?

Thus much by way of introduction to chaps. i. and iii.; the meaning which the prophet's sad history, interpreted, as he felt, by an inward divine voice, conveyed to him, will be seen in its full beauty, when we come to chaps. iv.—xiv. The word 'allegory' or 'parable' belongs properly not to these chapters, but to chap. ii., in which the ideas which Hosea had gained through his providential discipline are set forth in figurative language. The position of this chapter (with which i. 10, 11 ought, as we shall see, to be taken) is remarkable. Whether its contents represent Hosea's thoughts previously to the events described in chap. iii., is uncertain; the chapter may equally well express his later reflexions, and be simply designed as a commentary on the names 'Lo-ruhamah' and 'Lo-ammi' in i. 6, 9.

CHAPTER III.

The second Book of Hosea.—A reproduction, not a report.—Neither in chronological nor in logical order.—Heart-logic.—Gomer and Hosea both types.

With the Messianic promise (taking this adjective in the wider sense) at the end of chap. iii., we have evidently reached the close of one great portion of prophecy. Chaps. iv.—xiv. have a unity of their own: we might almost call them the second Book of Hosea. That there is a substratum of prophetic oratory is proved by the allusions to facts and persons, obscure to us but clear to the original hearers; in fact, in ix. 1 the motive of the discourse is still perfectly visible. Yet we cannot suppose that Hosea delivered any part of this 'book' in its present form; it can only be a reproduction by the prophet himself of the main points of his discourses, partly imaginative, partly on the basis of notes. We might have looked for this to prove a connected record of the state of things in Israel from one definite historical

point to another. Such however is not the case. Although in one respect chap. iv. seems to justify its priority (namely, that Judah is spoken of more hopefully, ver. 15, than later on), yet upon the whole we cannot say that the early chapters belong, say, to Menahem's reign, and the later ones to Pekah's. Nor is there any clear evidence of a designed logical connexion; Bishop Lowth even compares the book to 'sparsa quædam Sibyllæ folia.' Pauses there are from time to time in the prophecy (see especially v. 1, viii. 1, ix. 1, xii. 1), but it is not obvious that they mark stages in the development of an argument. There is indeed an argument, but it is one of the heart, not of the head. It is based on the assumption that Jehovah cannot be less loving and less faithful than the creatures He has made. Bitter domestic experience has developed in the prophet the most wonderful capacity for unselfish affection, and he argues from this (somewhat as our Lord in Matt. vii. 11) to the existence of a still greater passion of self-sacrificing love in 'the framer of hearts.' We have seen how Hosea, after selecting, as he had thought, a bride like the Shulamite of his favourite poem, discovered to his unutterable grief that instead of a 'lily of the valleys' (Cant. ii. 1), he had unawares

> 'enfolded in [his] arms
> A lily torn and trampled in the mire[1].'

We have seen, too, how, after Gomer had fled from her home, in obedience to an unchaste impulse, the master-feeling which that sweet old poem calls 'strong as Death' and 'obstinate as Sheól[2]' (Cant. viii. 6), prompted him to rescue her from her destitution, and bring her home again, not indeed at first to freedom, but to the cleansing chastisement of seclusion. We have seen the bitter experience, but not as yet penetrated into the mystery of its meaning. Both Hosea's impulses were according to the

[1] Dean Plumptre (*Lazarus and other Poems*, p. 85), who however prefixes the words 'I, knowing all', which imply a misinterpretation of i. 2.

[2] Death is a synonym for Sheól or the Hebrew Hades (as Isa. xxviii. 15, 18, xxxviii. 18). The Underworld is represented as having a mysterious power of attracting and swallowing up all men.

unmistakable will of God, who overruled this domestic tragedy to a wise and gracious end. Hosea was to learn what no prophet had learned before, and what no prophet ever could have learned by a mechanical revelation from without—viz. that the essence of the divine nature was not justice but love (comp. 1 John iv. 8). Gomer in her prime of purity was a symbol of Israel whom Jehovah 'found as grapes in the wilderness' (ix. 10); in her unnatural infidelity, of Israel who 'went after' the Baalim (ii. 13); in her undeserved gradual restitution into the position of a wife, of Israel, first led aside into the wilderness, and then taken back to the full favour of an eternally loving God. And Hosea in his mixed and harrowing feelings towards Gomer is himself a type of Jehovah. His loathing abhorrence of her sin, his flaming indignation at her infidelity, and, stronger than either, his tender compassion at the depth of misery to which she has reduced herself, are but a reflexion of Jehovah's feelings towards His people. Hosea's work is to give expression to this newly-found truth.

He does so in what may be called in the main a lyric monologue of Jehovah Himself. He has no occasion to say, 'Thus saith the Lord[1].' Without referring to any past revelation and clothing it in self-chosen words, he feels and knows that the words which well up from his heart adequately express the feelings of the divine Heart. Gomer in fact is not merely an emblem; she is a representative. As Gomer has erred, so Israel as a nation has erred. Gomer was unchaste and, it would seem, a devotee of Ashérah; so were too many others of the women of Israel, while the kindred worship of Baal or Baal-Jehovah absorbed the religious feelings of the men. Hosea, who has learned to 'know Jehovah', is cut to the quick by such apostasy; he spares no detail of the abominations that are committed; with a kind of grieved surprise he puts before the people the inevitable punishment, but when he has fully realized the awful nature of the doom, he melts with pity, and recalls the woe (see xiii. 13—xiv. 1)[2]. His

[1] This formula occurs only once in chaps. iv.—xiv.; see xi. 11.

[2] In his flow of sympathy towards the object of the judgment Hosea

feelings are those which are natural to a pure-minded worshipper of Jehovah, trained in the high thoughts of prophetic religion; but they also correspond, as an inner voice assures Hosea, to what may analogously be called the feelings of Jehovah, who has prepared His servant in so exceptional a way to think in unison with Himself. A fitter person than Hosea surely could not be found to be Israel's prophet in the gathering storm. Knowing Jehovah's 'secret' (Am. iii. 7), he could be faithful to Him without being untrue to Israel. Next to Jehovah, he loves his country and his wife with a clinging, inextinguishable love. But only next to Jehovah; for Hosea knows that all relationship is rooted in Him, and that both the people of Israel (xi. 1) and each individual Israelite (i. 10) are before everything else ideally Jehovah's sons. If we cannot therefore *strictly* call him a patriot, we can at any rate say that he has something higher than even patriotism—an enthusiasm for that 'pearl of great price' described by the phrase 'the divine sonship of Israel.'

CHAPTER IV.

The five leading ideas of the prophecy.—(a) Immorality of the northern kingdom.—(b) Sinfulness of the idolatrous Jehovah-worship and of the confusion of Jehovah and Baal.—(c) Sinfulness of Israel's foreign policy.—(d) Sinfulness of the separate kingdom of Israel.—(e) The conception of love as the bond between Jehovah and Israel, and between the individual Israelites.—Hosea compared with prophets before and after him.—No personal Messiah in Hosea.

To summarize the contents of the book before us is a peculiarly difficult task, systematic order being more alien to Hosea than perhaps to any other prophet. Still an incomplete sketch

is only exceeded by the unknown author of the early prophecy on Moab in Isa. xv., xvi., adopted by Isaiah (see Isa. xvi. 13). The latter too was possibly a N. Israelite, to judge from his minute acquaintance with Moabitish topography.

may be attempted. (*a*) It will be noticed at once what a large part of his book is taken up with lamentations over the general immorality of the Israelites, which appears (comparing the statements of Amos and Hosea with those of the prophets of Judah) to have been more glaring than that which at any time prevailed in the south. The Israelites of the north seem, in fact, to have admitted a larger Canaanite element than those of the south, who had received a considerable infusion of Arab blood[1]. Not that Hosea altogether neglects the moral state of Judah. At first he gives a more favourable verdict of her than of the sister-country (i. 6, 7, comp. iv. 15), but later on strong complaints of her misconduct are incidentally made—complaints, through which we can hear the pulsations of a loving heart (v. 10—13, vi. 4, xi. 12). Hosea, therefore, like all the 'goodly fellowship', is a preacher of morality. He represents Jehovah as saying,

> 'For I delight in love, and not in sacrifice,
> and in the knowledge of God more than in burnt-offerings' (vi. 6);

and whatever the precise meaning of 'love' may be (on which see some pages further on), 'love to man' must be, even if only indirectly, referred to, just as the 'knowledge of God' includes the imitation of God (as Jer. xxii. 16). It was the sacred duty of the priests, according to Hosea, to teach a morality based upon pure religion (iv. 6); instead of which, they only promoted a worship which infallibly developed into at least one form of gross immorality, and welcomed the spread of iniquity, because the consequent sin-offerings were profitable to themselves (v. 1, iv. 8). They even took the lead in outraging the law (vi. 9), and the prophet tells us soon after, that even the king and the princes took an unnatural delight in the general licence (vii. 3). So true was that which Isaiah, perhaps at this very time, said of the northern kingdom,

> 'And they that lead this people cause them to err,
> and they that are led of them are destroyed' (Isa. ix. 16).

[1] Prof. Robertson Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 201.

(*b*) Hosea does not, however, delude himself with the idea that preaching will of itself convert his brethren. He knows but too well that their errors in morality have sprung from their 'backsliding' in religion, in a word, from their idolatry (evidence of which still exists in the oldest Israelitish seals). And hence one of the most striking features of Hosea is his incessant polemic against the worship—not of the Phœnician Baal, which had been put down by Jehu—but of the small plated images of a bull, which were the symbols of Jehovah in the local sanctuaries of the north (1 Kings xii. 28, comp. Ex. xxxii. 4, 5). Even Amos has not a word to say against these images, whereas Hosea flatly denies that there is any divine power behind them (viii. 5, 6) and describes them as the source of all the varied evils which are ruining the community. And the longer he lived, the more convinced of this he became. In chap. ii., as we have seen, he does not refer to the corrupting effect upon morals of the popular religion, but chaps. iv.—xiv. are full of it. The corruption was doubtless growing deeper every year. The God of Israel, through being addressed as Baal (ii. 16), was confounded with the local divinities of the Canaanites[1], and the moral influence of the old Jehovah-worship was lost. Indeed, the Baal-cultus itself, in which the Jehovah-cultus was now practically merged, was descending in the scale of religions. The Israelites were no longer in the stage of naïve faith, and so could not recognize the old nature-worship in its original significance. They were formalists of the worst kind, because the meaning of their forms had never been a high and elevating one. And besides this, the still grosser form of Baal-cultus introduced by the Tyrian princess[2] Jezebel probably had a baleful effect on the native religion, since its persecuted adherents would become

[1] The Israelites considered themselves Jehovah-worshippers (viii. 13, ix. 4, 5). But the prophet quietly calls the local Jehovah-Baals 'other gods' (iii. 1), and says that in her feast-days Israel 'forgat me' (ii. 13; comp. 11).

[2] Comparing 1 Kings xvi. 31 with Menander in Josephus *Antiq.* viii. 13, 2 and *Contra Apion.* i. 18, we may infer, with Ewald (*History*, iv. 39) that Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal king of Tyre, who had formerly been a priest of Astarte.

fused with those of the latter, and would bring their gross practices and licentious spirit with them. (On the whole subject of the popular religion of N. Israel, see commentary on ii. 13, 16, 21, 22).

(*c*) One proof of the formalism of the Jehovah-Baal worship (though it is a proof, as we shall see, of something else besides) is the want of faith in the protecting care of its deity shown by the north-Israelitish people. We must first of all ascertain Hosea's judgment on this point, and then explain in what sense we can adopt it. Not only, says the prophet, has 'Ephraim' deserted Jehovah, but he has also 'hired loves among the nations' (viii. 9, 10). This is an expression for the attempts of the rulers to bribe the favour of their powerful neighbours Egypt and Assyria (see v. 13, vii. 11, viii. 9, 10, xii. 1, xiv. 3, and comp. 2 Kings xvii. 4). In fact, there seem to have been two factions in the northern as well as probably in the southern kingdom (Isa. xxx. 1—7, xxxi. 1—3, comp. 2 Kings xvi. 7), the one devoted to Assyria, the other to Egypt. Hosea was equally opposed to both. Like Dante, he thought it an honour 'to have formed a party by himself alone[1].' Hosea denounces the policy of the rulers as not merely a sin but a blunder. To trust in chariots and horses in preference to Jehovah, who was 'their God from the land of Egypt' (xii. 9, xiii. 4), is the part of 'a silly dove without understanding' (vii. 11). To coquet with the neighbouring empires will too surely lead to enforced expatriation. Egypt and Assyria (such perhaps is the prophet's meaning, comp. Isa. vii. 18, 19) shall fight for the land of Israel, and shall each carry part of the inhabitants into captivity. Instead of the gentle yoke of Jehovah, so touchingly described in the words—

> 'I was unto them as they that lift up the yoke over their cheeks,
> and I bent towards him and gave him food' (xi. 4),

the Israelites shall pass under the tyranny of aliens,—

> 'He shall return unto the land of Egypt,
> and Asshur—he shall be his king,
> because they have refused to return' (xi. 5).

[1] *Paradise*, xvii. 69.

Such is Hosea's judgment on the 'folly' of the Israelites, and his prophetic intuition of its inevitable consequences. He expresses himself with a condensation which may obscure to some readers the real kernel of his thought. What he really means we have to divine from our knowledge of his religious position. We must remember that the Jehovah of the N. Israelites was very different from the Jehovah of Hosea, and that he had now sunk to the level of the Canaanitish Baal. The necessary consequence, at that stage of the Baal-worship, was formalism; and when to this was added the surprising successes of the Assyrians, whose warfare was avowedly in part directed against foreign deities as well as foreign nations[1], we cannot be surprised that the Israelites began to distrust the protecting care of their god. Logically, therefore, the 'folly' of the Israelites consisted, not in making terms with Assyria, but in accepting a corrupt form of the worship of Jehovah, which could no more inspire courage than the love of goodness, and therefore doomed its adherents to a rapid national decline.

(*d*) Another leading idea in this prophecy is one very closely connected with those already mentioned, viz. the sinfulness of the separate kingdom of Israel. Hosea has a remarkably clear view of the different aspects of the 'schism', and represents Jehovah as saying—

> 'I give thee kings in mine anger,
> and take them away in my wrath' (xiii. 11).

In one sense, then, the separate kingdom of Israel was justifiable; in another it was not. It must be confessed, however, that the latter aspect is predominant in Hosea's mind (comp. viii. 4), whereas the former is exclusively present to the narrator in 1 Kings xi. 29, comp. 2 Chron. xi. 4 (see further note on i. 4).

[1] Sargon says in his Annals, 'I counted all the armies of the god Assur, and I marched against these towns', and carries captive not only men but gods; he brings countries into subjection not merely to himself but to Assur (*Records of the Past*, vii. 25—26). Esarhaddon's Annals contain the remarkable statement that, after taking away the gods of the Arabs, he wrote the mighty deeds of 'Assur my lord' upon them, and also his own name, and sent them back repaired (Budge, *The History of Esarhaddon*, p. 57).

The ground for Hosea's severe view is that he feels pure religion to be the safeguard of the national existence. As no compromise is allowable between Jehovah and Baal, so there should be no opposition to the divinely sanctioned house of David. A rival dynasty involves a rival deity, as Hosea expressly says in viii. 4. The Israelites might regard themselves as worshippers of Jehovah, but the prophet contradicts this without scruple in the following verses (viii. 5, 6). He certainly yearned for the healing of the 'schism' by a Davidic king, and speaks in his earlier prophecy (iii. 5) as if Providence were leading in this direction. The event proved that he was too hopeful, but the fact that he left his early work unaltered, shows what a mistake it is to insist too much on a literal fulfilment of every detail of prophecy, particularly in Hosea the most lyrical and the least reflective of all the prophets, who evidently uses prediction, just as he uses upbraidings and threatenings, partly to relieve his own overwrought feelings, partly to move his people to a timely repentance. As Prebendary Huxtable remarks, 'The style very often assumes the form of prediction; but this form is probably for the most part adopted, rather as an engine of persuasion, than as an absolute foretelling of what was about to happen[1].' No doubt some of Hosea's particular predictions have been fulfilled, but we have no right to assume that the prophet himself attached more importance to these predictions than to others. The truth is that he has no fixed view respecting the future of Judah, much less about the reunion of the two kingdoms. In i. 6, 7 he contrasts the mercy not extended to Israel with the mercy extended to Judah, but in vi. 11 (comp. v. 5, 14, viii. 14, x. 11, xii. 2), he points to a 'harvest' of retribution for Judah similar to that destined for Israel; and if in i. 11 he anticipates the healing of the 'schism', yet in chap. xiv. his radiant description of the future contains not a line of hope for Judah.

(*e*) And now, to complete this brief sketch, a conception has to be described which is the highest and deepest, and therefore the most fundamental, in the book. As Professor Davidson

[1] *Speaker's Commentary*, vol. vi. p. 405.

has shown[1], all the other conceptions which have been mentioned admit of being derived from this. We need not however conclude that it was the first to be developed in the mind of Hosea, but only that when Providence caused it to germinate, it strengthened his hold on every other truth. We have already spoken of it by anticipation as 'a newly-found truth' (p. 21), because though it is also prominent in the Book of Deuteronomy, there is no satisfactory evidence that that remarkable book was generally known in the age of Hosea. It is the truth 'that love is the highest attribute of God; so that a man should love God, and from love to Him keep all His commandments, because God first loved him[2]; which easily leads to the conclusion that a man ought in like manner to love his fellow man[3].' These words of Ewald, written with reference to Deuteronomy, are equally applicable to Hosea, though a slight inaccuracy seems to need correction[4]. The duty of brotherly love is not, either in Hosea or in Deuteronomy, an inference from the fact that Israel has been first loved by God; it is rather a condition of the individual Israelite's participation in that love. The stream of Jehovah's love flows forth to Israel as a community[5]; he who would drink of this stream must prove his right by proving his membership in the community, which can only be done by showing love to his brother-Israelites. It would be still more accurate to say that the true Israelite is one who loves both his fellow-Israelites and Jehovah of his own accord, just as Jehovah of His own accord loved Israel (ix. 10, xi. 1, comp. xiv. 4)[6]. All human

[1] *The Expositor*, 1879, p. 258 &c.

[2] 'See Deut. vi. 4—9, vii. 6—11; further, xi. 1, x. 15, xxiii. 6, with x. 12, 13, xix. 9, and at the close xxx. 6—20.'

[3] 'Deut. x. 18, 19.'

[4] *History of Israel*, iv. 223. It seems clear that the commands to love Jehovah in Deuteronomy are addressed to Israel, not to the individual Israelite.

[5] Prof. Davidson well says, 'Throughout the prophets, who are statesmen in the kingdom of God, the person or subject with whom Jehovah enters into relations is always the community of Israel' (*The Expositor*, 1879, p. 258).

[6] 'Loyalty and kindness between man and man are not duties inferred from Israel's relation to Jehovah, they are parts of that relation;

relationships within the Israelitish community are rooted in the primal love of Jehovah to Israel; Hosea learned this truth in the school of Providence, and he implies it in all his moral teaching. It is this primal love, however, which fills the foreground of Hosea's prophecies. His highest aim is to set forth its moral nature, as opposed to the altogether non-moral and quasi-physical union supposed to exist between a heathen deity and his worshippers. Jehovah is not more loving than righteous. His union with His people may be, must be indestructible, but this is because (to quote Israel's great eulogy of love once more) 'love is strong as Death', and therefore must be able to command a response of love in its own object (comp. ii. 15, 'she shall respond there' &c.). The Israelites must one day feel a love to Jehovah which is not merely as a 'morning-cloud' (vi. 4), and Hosea exhausts the resources of his art in picturing this delightful future (chap. xiv.). The sin of individuals cannot hinder Jehovah's mercy to the nation; only if the actual nation persists in forsaking His law, it will have to pass through a very hurricane of cleansing judgment (xiii. 15).

Such being the principal idea of the book, can we be surprised that the chief speaker is Jehovah Himself? There was no conscious striving after effect on Hosea's part, but had he only professed to report a message from Jehovah, how cold by comparison would his words have left us! 'God only knows the love of God', and if the words of the prophecy are stamped with the genius of Hosea, they are none the less truthful revelations of the divine Heart. The delicacy of the prophet's phraseology is worthy of note. Though he does not shrink from using one of the ordinary words for 'to love' in describing Jehovah's relation to Israel (xi. 1), yet the word which gives the tone as it were to the book is one with a distinctly moral tinge—*khésed*. As is explained in the note on iv. 6, this word has a threefold application, and can be used of the relation of God to man, of man to God, and of a man to his neighbour. It is assumed that the

love to Jehovah and love to one's brethren in Jehovah's house are identical (compare iv. 1 with vi. 4, 6).' Robertson Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 162.

giver and the receiver of *khésed* are united by a bond of moral obligation, and in the three passages in which the word occurs in Deuteronomy (v. 10, vii. 9, 12), the idea of a covenant or contract is either expressed or (as in v. 10) implied. This idea is not indeed completely developed in Hosea's mind (see on vi. 7, vii. 1), but he knows full well that there is a moral bond between Jehovah and Israel, comparable to the relation of a husband to a wife (as especially in chaps. i.—iii.), or of a father to a son (as xi. 1, 3, 8, xiii. 13, comp. i. 10)[1], though since Jehovah is 'God and not man' (xi. 9), higher than either, because free from all earthly taint. The word occurs six times in Hosea in its various senses[2], and, as has been hinted already, it is now and then slightly difficult to define its meaning. The point to remember is that by adopting this word (which is not used once by the sterner prophet Amos) Hosea impresses the idea that Jehovah's love to Israel, keen as it is, has a moral foundation. The Psalmists took up both the idea and the expression; where the Auth. Vers. renders 'saint', the Hebrew generally has *khāsīd*, loving or pious one. In one psalm it is interesting to observe that 'my pious ones' is explained in the parallel line by 'those that have made a covenant with me' (Ps. l. 5), which confirms the view of *khésed* taken above.

These are the five leading ideas of the prophecy of Hosea. They are covered over with the flowers of poetic imagery, and the student might have missed the salient points of the book without thus much of guidance. It will be seen that we owe a precious truth to Hosea, and that his book marks a fresh stage in the slow progress of revelation. Compare him with Amos who prophesied but a few decades earlier. Amos had a keen

[1] This, like the former, corresponds to a heathen Semitic conception; see Num. xxi. 29, where the Moabites are described as 'sons' of Chemosh. Prof. W. Wright has pointed out similar instances of the use of 'son' for 'worshipper' in Syriac proper names, e.g. Bar-Hadad, Bar-lāhā, Bar-Ba'-shĕmīn, in which the second name of the compound is the appellation of the deity (Hadad, Alāhā, Ba'l-shĕmīn) specially worshipped by the person so named. *Transactions of the Soc. of Biblical Archæology*, vi. 438.

[2] See ii. 21, iv. 1, vi. 4, 6, x. 12, xii. 7.

sense of justice, and rightly transfers this attribute to Jehovah, but he had not that wonderful intuition of the milder side of the divine nature which we find in Hosea. Amos thinks of Jehovah as the king of Israel and her judge; Hosea as her Husband and her Father. Amos again expresses no dread of the religious symbolism prevalent in N. Israel; like Elijah and Elisha, he lets the 'golden calves' pass without a word of protest. Hosea feels that those gross animal symbols distract the attention of the worshippers from those moral attributes in which Jehovah delights most to be known. We need not then be surprised that, having achieved so much, he falls short in various ways of the attainments of his successors. (*a*) If he equals Jeremiah in tenderness, he is inferior to him in moral depth. He has no conception of the relation of Jehovah to the individual soul, apart from the nation, and therefore no presentiment of Jeremiah's profound idea of the new covenant. Again (*b*), he does not succeed like Isaiah and (still more) Jeremiah in expressing his latent consciousness of the unity of God (comp. on i. 10, ii. 10). As a rule, like Amos, he speaks of Jehovah as the national God of the Israelites (comp. iii. 4, 5, ix. 3), and only perhaps once crosses the line which separates monolatry (or the acknowledgment of one God as the national patron) and monotheism, viz. when he says that the converted Israelites shall be called 'sons of the living God' (i. 10)[1], implying apparently that the other so-called gods were 'dead' (in the sense of Ps. cvi. 28). And (*c*) although it is clear from iii. 4 that Hosea (at least at one time) hoped great things from a future Davidic prince, yet there is wanting that touch of mystery and passionate emotion which we find in Isaiah's two great prophecies of (to use the later phrase) the Messiah. It is true that a scholar as accurate as he is orthodox (Delitzsch) thinks that 'David' in the passage referred to means 'a king who is the *antitype* and

[1] One is tempted to quote xiii. 4, but though the conclusion may seem to point to monotheism, the preceding words are only a strong expression of monolatry. The belief that Jehovah is higher than all other divinities (*'el 'elyōn*) does not necessarily imply that no other gods have a real existence.

descendant of David[1].' But since no stress is laid on the character of the king, and in i. 11 he is merely spoken of as a 'head', it seems better to explain the term on the analogy of 1 Kings xii. 6, and to leave the prophet of Immanuel in his unapproached originality. Thus Hosea, to whom kingship is not the most congenial idea, merely maintains, and that without any emphasis, the position already won by Amos (ix. 11, 12) that the family of David, now shorn of so much of its glory, shall yet stand at the head of a reunited and victorious nation[2].

CHAPTER V.

His style.—His unconnectedness.—His love of figures.—Has the language of his book been retouched?—Literary influences to which Hosea was subject.—Did he know the Pentateuch?—His own testimony to the existence of written laws.—Parallelisms in Hosea and the Pentateuch.—Hosea's literary influence on later writers.—Are the New Testament references to Hosea to be accepted as regulative of critical exegesis?

THE proverb, 'le style c'est l'homme', is peculiarly true of Hosea. His genius especially fitted him for lyric poetry, and in more favourable circumstances and with more artistic culture he might have produced the most admirable psalms and elegies. Duty however compelled him to 'hang up his harp' and preach to a perverse generation. How he preached, we can hardly judge from his book, which is anything but a verbal reproduction of discourses actually delivered; but we may fairly surmise that his preaching would have seemed ineffective by

[1] *Messianic Prophecies*, translated by Curtiss (1880), pp. 60, 61.

[2] Neither Amos nor Hosea speaks of a Davidic world-empire; their outlook into the future is purely national. In Am. xi. 12 we should render 'and all the nations (*not*, heathen) which have been (*not*, are) called by my name.' The prophet means that the empire of David should one day be restored in its fullest extent.

the side of that of Amos. It was not so much the mere chill of neglect (for Amos suffered equally from this) as the emotional distress caused by his message of woe that choked his utterance and brought confusion into his style. The prize of the orator and the lyric poet he left to others, but could not disown the gift of song with which God had endowed him. As Ewald remarks, 'in its free outbursts the discourse [sometimes] approaches to the nature of lyric poetry[1]', though few will follow that great scholar in his strophic arrangement of the book: the transitions of thought in Hosea are too abrupt to be brought into a scheme of such an artificial order. 'Exhaustless is the sorrow', as Ewald elsewhere says, 'endless the grief wherever the mind turns, and ever and anon the tossing restless discourse begins again, like the wild cry of an anguish that can hardly be mastered[2].' Symmetrical divisions, then, such as we can easily make in the oratorical prophet Amos, are out of the question. There is but rarely a distinct connexion, except in the tone of feeling, even between one verse and another. As St Jerome remarked long ago, 'Osee commaticus est [is broken up into clauses] et quasi per sententias loquens[3]'; or, in the words of Dr Pusey, 'each verse forms a whole for itself, like one heavy toll in a funeral knell[4].' Even the fetters of grammar are almost too much for Hosea's vehement feeling; inversions (vii. 8, ix. 11, 13, xii. 8, and perhaps xiv. 9), anacolutha (ix. 6, xii. 8 &c.), and ellipses (ix. 4, xiii. 9 &c.) are especially frequent in his prophecy. Parallelism, which is elsewhere so prominent in poetical and rhetorical language, and which is often so great a help to the interpreter, is feebly represented; Hosea's rhythm is the artless rhythm of sighs and sobs. It is remarkable, however, that, unlike Jeremiah, he can take bold poetic flights in the midst of his grief. His figures are full of suggestiveness. Thus he compares Jehovah on His terrible side to the lion (v. 14, xiii. 7), the panther (xiii. 7), and the bear (xiii. 8); he does not even

[1] Ewald, *The Prophets*, i. 228.
[2] Ewald, i. 218.
[3] Preface to the Minor Prophets.
[4] *Minor Prophets*, p. 6.

disdain the simile of a moth (v. 12); while to represent the milder aspect of his God he has recourse to the latter rain (vi. 3) and the beneficent provision of the 'night-mist' (xiv. 5). The figure of the lion's roar in xi. 10 is used exceptionally, not to set forth the terrors of God's judgments, but His far-reaching summons to His scattered children. With equal or still greater suggestiveness the Israel of the future is compared to the 'lily' which grows so profusely in the north of Palestine, and the stedfast roots of the cedar (xiv. 6), and to the ever-green fir-tree of Lebanon[1] (xiv. 8). Paronomasias and plays upon words are also very characteristic of Hosea in his non-lyrical moods (see viii. 7, ix. 15, x. 5, xi. 5, xii. 11, and notice the use of the name Jezreel in i. 4, 11, comp ii. 22, 23; the change of the name Beth-el into Beth-aven in iv. 15, x. 5, comp. *v.* 8; the allusion to the derivation of Ephraim in ix. 16, xiii. 15, and perhaps xiv. 9). All these peculiarities, it is to be feared, give the Book of Hosea a rather repellent aspect, which is not diminished by the number of peculiar words and constructions, and by the corrupt state of some parts of the text. It would be interesting to learn whether we really possess the discourses of Hosea in their original dialect, or whether they have been retouched for the benefit of a new public. The latter is in itself a plausible hypothesis, though incapable of demonstration; except a few Aramaic words and verbal forms (which may not all of them be due to Hosea) there is nothing in the language even distantly suggestive of a northern dialect[2].

In dealing with a great writer like Hosea, we are bound to ask, To what literary influences of his time was he subject? A question in this case more easily asked than answered, owing to our ignorance of the literature of the northern kingdom. The Song of Songs Hosea was almost certainly familiar with (see xiv. 6—9), and we have no right to suppose that this was the

[1] Prof. Robertson Smith's interesting remarks on this figure (*The Prophets of Israel*, p. 190) depend for their validity on an interpretation of the passage which the present writer is unable to adopt.

[2] In literary Hebrew, remarks Gesenius, there is nothing which has a sufficient claim to pass for a provincialism.

only northern poem which educated and enriched his fancy. The Book of Amos was doubtless known in N. Israel, and would have a special interest for Hosea, though the two prophets are at the opposite poles of style, and except in Hos. iv. 15, x. 5, 8 (comp. Am. i. 5, v. 5), Hos. viii. 14 (comp. Am. i. 4 &c.), Hos. xi. 10 (comp. Am. i. 2) we cannot say that the younger prophet has clear allusions to the elder[1]. There may have been other prophetic writings known to him, Joel for instance (Joel iii. 16 is more strikingly parallel to Hos. xi. 10 than Am. i. 2), or if not Joel (the early date of this book being now frequently called in question), some no longer extant books, for the reference of the phrase 'the prophets' in Hos. vi. 5 is perhaps not to be confined to prophets like Elijah and Elisha; at least we can hardly suppose that written prophecy sprang into existence in Joel (?) and Amos almost in full perfection[2]. What amount of written history or legislation Hosea had before him is much disputed. That he was acquainted with many salient facts in the traditional narratives is indeed certain:—see for the life of Jacob, xii. 3, 4, 12; for the destruction of the cities of the 'circle' of the Jordan, xi. 8; for the Exodus, ii. 15, xi. 1, xii. 9[3], 13; for the

[1] In the first of these passages the allusion is in the name Beth-aven (House of vanity, i.e. of vain idols, for Beth-el, House of God); similarly Amos speaks of the 'valley of Aven.' In the second Hosea refers to the refrain with which Amos closes each of his seven denunciations in Am. i. 4—ii. 5. In the third he follows Amos in comparing Jehovah to a lion.

[2] See Ewald (*The Prophets*, i. 60), who lays great stress on the indications of an earlier prophetic literature in the Book of Joel (see ii. 32 'as Jehovah has said', and notice how 'the day of Jehovah' and the restoration of Judah are spoken of in i. 15, ii. 1, iii. 1 as already familiar to the reader). He also refers to Hos. vii. 12 'according to the announcement to the community', and to the 'fragments from the earliest period' cited by Isaiah in ii. 2—4 (comp. Mic. iv. 1—4) and xv.—xvi. 12.

[3] In this verse most find *two* allusions to the early history, the one in the phrase 'Jehovah thy God from the land of Egypt' and the other in the mention of 'dwelling in tents.' The second allusion however depends on the rendering of the Hebrew *'ōdh;* is it to be rendered 'yet again', or simply 'yet' (i.e. 'in the future'), as Auth. Vers.? In the latter case there is no necessary allusion to the privations of the desert-wanderings. See commentary.

wanderings, ii. 3, xiii. 5; for Achan (?), ii. 15; for Baal-peor, ix. 10; and for the outrage at Gibeah, ix. 9, x. 9. It was the custom with the older commentators to leap from this to the conclusion that Hosea had before him the canonical books in which the same occurrences are referred to; but we cannot be sure that he did not obtain these facts from oral tradition or from sources earlier than the canonical books in their present form (see commentary on xii. 3, 4). More stress may plausibly be laid on the parallelisms of phraseology and idea in Hosea and the Pentateuch. Almost every commentary on Hosea contains lists of such parallelisms, and for completeness' sake a list is appended here, though the writer must express the hope that students in an early stage will remember the youthful David's reply to king Saul in 1 Sam. xvii. 39. Such a list will only be of any real value to those who have already satisfied themselves on other grounds as to the period of the composition of the books of the Pentateuch. One test of the soundness of such a critical decision will be its relation to the history of the progress of revelation. If it be impossible to write this history with Deuteronomy accepted as a work of the Mosaic or at any rate pre-Hezekian age, of what use is any number of parallelisms between Deuteronomy and the Book of Hosea? All that is certain with regard to Hosea's relation to the Law is what he tells us himself, viz. that laws with a sanction which, though ignored by the N. Israelites, he himself recognized as divine were in course of being written down[1] (viii. 12). Our present text makes him even say that the divine precepts might be reckoned by myriads, but this would not apply even to our present Pentateuch, and we should probably correct *ribbo* 'myriad' into *dibhré* 'words (of

[1] The Targum and Aben Ezra, followed by the Authorized Version, render 'I have written' (better, 'I wrote'). The tense is the imperfect, which is sometimes used in highly poetical passages where past occurrences are referred to; see Driver, *Hebrew Tenses*, § 27 (1) (β). Such a use of the imperfect would however here be isolated, nor is the passage in a poetical style. We must therefore reject the rendering of Auth. Vers., and with it the theory that the prophet refers simply and solely to a body of Mosaic legislation. In fact, when Moses is referred to by Hosea, it is as a prophet and a leader of the people, not as a legislator (xii. 13).

my law)[1].' There may of course either have been various small law-books, or one large one; we cannot determine this point from the Book of Hosea. So far as we can infer anything, the laws in question must have been of a simple character, and have related to civil justice rather than to rites and ceremonies. In the centralization of worship, which is so prominent in the Book of Deuteronomy, Hosea takes no interest; he does not even mention Jerusalem, and applies the phrase 'the house of Jehovah' to a temple or temples of Jehovah in the 'schismatic' kingdom (ix. 4). Mr Sharpe[2] has, it is true, revived an opinion of St Jerome that the words—

> 'For Ephraim has multiplied altars in order to sin,
> altars are to him for the purpose of sinning' (viii. 11),

refer to the Deuteronomic law of one altar (Deut. xii. 11—14), but the repetition of 'to sin' proves that the emphasis is not on the multiplied altars but on the 'sin' committed at the altars (comp. iv. 13, 14; Am. ii. 8). Indeed, was it likely that a prophet who had already mentioned 'sacred pillars' and even 'teraphim' without a word of remark on their illegality[3] (iii. 4) would denounce the Israelites for their hereditary custom of multiplying altars?

With these preliminary cautions, we may proceed to collect parallelisms of phraseology in Hosea and the Pentateuch. Compare—

Gen. xxii. 17 — xxxii. 12	with	Hos.	i. 10 ('as the sand of the sea').
Ex. iv. 22	,,	,,	xi. 1 ('my son').
— xxiii. 13	,,	,,	ii. 17 (names of idols to be abolished).
Deut. xviii. 15	,,	,,	xii. 13 (Moses a great prophet).
— xxvi. 14	,,	,,	ix. 4 (mourning bread).
— xxviii. 68	,,	,,	viii. 13 (Israel's return to Egypt).
— xxxi. 16	,,	,,	i. 2 (religious symbolism).
— xxxii. 10	,,	,,	ix. 10 (Israel 'found in the wilderness').

[1] So Grätz and Kuenen; see on viii. 12.

[2] *Notes and Dissertations on Hosea* (1884), p. 83.

[3] The writer, of course, does not mean to imply that Hosea attached a religious value either to these pillars or to the sacrifices mentioned in the same passage (iii. 4).

The above is a short list compared with some that have been drawn up[1]: the more dubious parallelisms, like that of iv. 4 and Deut. xvii. 8—13, have been omitted. After all, is any one of them equal in interest to the striking parallelism of *thought* between Hosea and Deuteronomy indicated already (see p. 28)?

It only remains to estimate the literary influence of Hosea, putting aside such questions as the chronological relation of his book to that of Deuteronomy. As we have seen already, the prophetic roll must soon have been carried into Judah, where it quickly became a favourite, as we must infer from the more or less distinct allusions to it made by later prophets. There are not many of these in Isaiah, though both Amos and Hosea have contributed elements to his teaching; we can only be sure that Isaiah is alluding to his predecessor in i. 23, where he adopts a paronomasia from Hos. ix. 15. More allusions occur in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the second part of Zechariah: compare Hosea ii. 15 with Jer. ii. 2; Hosea iii. 5 with Jer. xxx. 9, Ezek. xxxiv. 25; Hos. iv. 3 with Jer. xii. 4 (and Zeph. i. 3); Hos. x. 12 with Jer. iv. 3; Hos. i.—iii. with Jer. iii. 8, Isa. l. 1, Ezek. xvi. and xxiii.; Hos. ii. 18 with Ezek. xxxiv. 25; Hos. ii. 22 with Jer. xxxi. 27, Zech. x. 9; Hos. ii. 17 with Zech. xiii. 2; Hos. xii. 8 with Zech. xi. 5. Some of these allusions relate to Hosea's striking application of the symbol of marriage. In fact, as the great Jewish scholar Dr Zunz has shown from medieval Hebrew poetry, this affecting symbol of their ideal hopes never ceased to attract and delight the poets of Israel. But this is not all. The New Testament, too, as we might expect, contains several expressed or implied references to the Book of Hosea:—compare Hos. i. 10 with Rom. ix. 26; Hos. ii. 1, 23 with Rom. ix. 25, 1 Pet. ii. 10; Hos. vi. 6 with Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7 (quotation by our Lord); Hos. x. 8 with Luke xxiii. 30, Rev. vi. 16, ix. 6; Hos. xi. 1 with Matt. ii. 15; Hos. xiii. 14 with 1 Cor. xv. 55. With regard to these references it hardly needs to be remarked that, so far as they imply interpretations, they would not all stand the test of a purely Western criticism. Their force was great to

[1] For longer lists see Curtiss, *The Levitical Priests* (1877), pp. 176—8; Sharpe, *Hosea* (1884), pp. 72—84.

those for whom the writers meant them, but cannot be equally so to us. It is allowable indeed to trace in the providential history of the people of Israel more than one *analogy* to that of Israel's Messiah, but to say that 'out of Israel did I call my son' (Hos. xi. 1) is in a strict sense of the word a prediction of the infant Christ's return from Egypt violates the canons of exegesis. Delitzsch against his will expresses the weakness of this position when he calls this a 'typical prophecy[1].' Typical persons and events one can understand, but if there be typical prophecies, what are the anti-typical ones? Surely for us Westerns the true Christian element in the Book of Hosea consists, not in 'typical prophecies', but in that far-reaching intuition of God's forgiving love which took shape as it were in the fulness of time in Jesus Christ.

[1] *Messianic Prophecies* (1880), pp. 61, 62.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

*** The chronology of the kings is perplexed and uncertain. From the Assyrian inscriptions the following dates have been obtained (see Schrader, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, translated by Whitehouse.

Jehu was alive in 842 (tribute to Shalmaneser).—Azariah or Uzziah 742–740.—Menahem 738 (tribute to Tiglath Pileser).—Pekah 734 (conquered by Tiglath Pileser).—Hoshea 728–722 (fall of Samaria).—Hezekiah 701 (invasion of Judah).

Various systems have been framed, partly on the basis of the Assyrian, partly on that of the Biblical data. The table which follows is a fragment of Duncker's (*History of Antiquity*, vol. ii.).

Judah.		Israel.	
		Jehu	843–815
Uzziah	792–740	Jeroboam II.	790–749
Jotham	740–734	Zechariah, Shallum	749
		Menahem	748–738
		Pekahiah	738–736
		Pekah	736–734
Ahaz	734–728	Hoshea	734–722
Hezekiah	728–697		

HOSEA.

THE word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son 1
of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, *and*
Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam
the son of Joash, king of Israel. The beginning of the 2
word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to
Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and chil-

CHAP. I.

HOSEA AND HIS WIFE. A PARABLE FOR THE ISRAELITES.

1. On the heading, see Introduction.

2. *The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea*] If we render the Hebrew text thus, the words are a heading to the first part of the book, viz. chaps. i.—iii.; they are apparently taken thus by the LXX., the Vulg., and perhaps the Targ. and the Peshito. It would however be better to translate with the Vulg., 'The beginning of Jehovah's speaking by (or, with) Hosea', because 'by Hosea' goes better with a verbal than with a common noun; or, with Kalisch, 'The beginning of that which Jehovah spoke' (comp. Job xviii. 21; Ps. lxxxi. 6); or, with Ewald, 'At the first, when Jehovah spoke with Hosea' (comp. Ps. iv. 8, xc. 15, and possibly Gen. i. 1). 'With Hosea' is the preferable rendering. As Ewald remarks, the phrase 'to speak with' implies that he who speaks is a superior being (comp. Zech. i. 9, 13, 14; Num. xii. 2, 8). The original narrative no doubt began at 'Jehovah said': the words prefixed make the sentence heavy.

take unto thee] i.e. marry (as Gen. vi. 2 and often), with regard to Gomer; recognize as thine own with regard to the children. Is this marriage of Hosea a real or a fictitious one? Symbolical it certainly is, but whether literally true or not, the student must decide on a view of the somewhat peculiar exegetical data. See Introduction, and comp. note below on *v.* 3.

a wife of whoredoms] *i.e.* (*a*) one with a deeply rooted inclination to adultery, or (*b*) as most explain, a woman already steeped in sin. In favour of (*a*), it may be pointed out that the prophet does not say, 'Take unto thee a harlot'. His wife is brought before us throughout

dren of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great
3 whoredom, *departing* from the LORD. So he went and took
Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and
4 bare him a son. And the LORD said unto him, Call his
name Jezreel; for yet a little *while*, and I will avenge the

as a type of Israel; she must at first have been innocent in act to symbolize what Jehovah elsewhere calls 'the kindness of thy (Israel's) youth, the love of thine espousals' (Jer. ii. 2). Upon this view it follows that the language employed is dictated by Hosea's subsequent experience. He could not, of course, know that Gomer had an inclination to infidelity, until it had been exhibited in act.

children of whoredoms] i.e. either children inheriting their mother's evil tendencies, or the offspring of an adulterous union. (Comp. ii. 4.)

for the land hath committed...] This is the meaning of Hosea's acted parable. As Gomer became the wedded wife of the prophet, so 'the land', i.e. the people, of northern Israel had entered into an analogous mystic relation to Jehovah (see on ii. 21, 22). As Gomer, after her espousals, committed whoredom, so Israel, after her first love, went astray after other gods (see chap. ii.). Israel in the narrower sense of the word seems to be meant, for afterwards we read 'I will have mercy upon the house of Judah' (*v.* 7).

3. *Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim*] Various attempts have been made to extract a meaning from these names, which by its appropriateness to the circumstances of the Israelites might favour the view that the events related are fictitious and not real. Gomer may plausibly be interpreted 'perfection' (i.e. consummate in wickedness), and Diblaim 'cakes of figs' (i.e. the sweetness of sin). Rahmer has pointed out this view in the Talmud (see Frankel's *Monatsschrift*, XIV. 216 foll.), so that St Jerome's similar explanation must have come from his Jewish teacher. But the fact that the children of Hosea (like those of Isaiah) have names which are obviously symbolic does not justify us in forcing an allusion out of the name of the mother. It has been suggested, but the view is not borne out by usage, that Diblaim is the name of Gomer's birthplace; Diblathaim was a Moabitish town (see Jer. xlviii. 22 and Moabite Stone l. 30). The termination is that of the dual.

bare him a son] i.e. bare a son, whom for the mother's sake he recognized.

4. *Call his name Jezreel*] The child of guilt; therefore not Israel but Jezreel (or, more exactly, Izreel). The name is referred to for its historical associations (comp. on ii. 22). It points both backward and forward—backward to the massacre of Ahab's family by Jehu (2 Kings ix. x.), and forward to the punishment for that wild and cruel act. Hosea (in whom natural peculiarities have been purified and not extinguished by the spirit of prophecy) regards the conduct of Jehu in a different light from the writer of 2 Kings x. 30. The latter praises Jehu for having 'done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in my mind': he speaks on the assumption that Jehu had the interests of

blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel. And it shall 5
come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. And she conceived again, and 6
bare a daughter. And *God* said unto him, Call her name Lo-ruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away. But 7
I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save

Jehovah's worship at heart, and that he destroyed the house of Ahab as the only effectual means of advancing them. The former blames Jehu apparently on the high moral ground that Jehovah 'desires mercy (love) and not sacrifice' (vi. 6). He speaks as the Israelites of his time doubtless felt. They no more recognized Jehu as a champion of Jehovah than did the priests of Baal whom he basely entrapped (2 Kings x. 18, &c.). But Hosea doubtless felt in addition that the idolatry to which the house of Jehu was addicted rendered a permanent religious reform hopeless. Image-worship could not be suppressed by such half-hearted worshippers of Jehovah, and hence, Jehovah's moral government of His people must have made it certain to Hosea that even on this ground alone the dynasty of Jehu could not escape an overthrow.

yet a little while, and I will avenge...] 'Avenge'; lit. 'visit'. Hosea represents (like a fellow-prophet, Am. vii. 9) the destruction of the northern kingdom as synchronizing with the overthrow of Jehu's dynasty. This was a remarkable proof of insight into God's purposes. Both prophets saw the beginning of the end, though the final catastrophe (722) took place about nineteen years later than the death of Jeroboam II. (741).

5. *the bow of Israel*] The bow, the symbol of power (Gen. xlix. 24; Jer. xlix. 35).

in the valley of Jezreel] It seemed fitting that this 'battlefield of Palestine' (as the valley of Jezreel had already become, see on Judg. vi. 33) should be the scene of so momentous an event, fitting also that where Jehu had sinned, Jehu's house should be punished. There would have been a 'poetical justice' in such an arrangement, had such been the will of Providence. But there can be no doubt that Hosea had an accurate knowledge of the Assyrians as the destined instruments of Israel's overthrow (see on viii. 10).

6. *bare a daughter*] The nation being personified sometimes as a man, sometimes as a woman.

Lo-ruhamah] i.e., Uncompassionated.

but I will utterly take them away] Rather, **that I should forgive them.**

7. *But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah*] Grave as are the charges brought against Judah by the prophets, it appears to have been some degrees better off religiously than Israel; probably, as it was a poorer country, its nature-worship was less extravagantly sensuous than that of the north. Hosea elsewhere counsels Judah not to offend

them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horse-
8 men. Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she con-
9 ceived, and bare a son. Then said *God*, Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye *are* not my people, and I will not be

to the same extent as Israel (iv. 15), and later on accuses Judah rather of inconstancy than of absolute rebellion (xi. 12).

by the LORD their God] Tautologically, as Gen. xix. 24. Or, 'as Jehovah their God' (i.e 'in the character of' &c., comp. Ex. vi. 3 'as El Shaddai', Ps. lxviii. 4 'his name is, essentially, in Jah'). Observe Hosea recognizes Judah's higher religious ideal.

not...by bow] Judah, then, was in danger of trusting in warlike equipments, as Isaiah afterwards describes it as doing (Isa. ii. 7). And yet, if Israel, with all its natural strength, could not resist the Assyrian attack, it was clear that the weaker kingdom could only do so by supernatural aid. Comp. Isa. xxxi. 8, xxxvii. 33. 'Battle' should be **equipment of war.**

8, 9. THE BIRTH OF A SON.

Lo-ammi] i.e. not my people. Observe the climax in the names. 'Jezreel' announces the judgment; Lo-ruhamah, the withdrawal of Jehovah's affection; Lo-ammi, the treatment of Israel as a foreign people.

I will not be your God] Lit., 'I will not be for (or, to) you', i.e. perhaps, 'on your side' (comp. Ps. lvi. 10, cxviii. 6, cxxiv. 1, 2), or, as Prof. Robertson Smith[1], 'I am no longer Ehyeh', alluding to Ex. iii. 14, 'And God said unto Moses, I will be that which I will be (viz. what I have promised and you look for); and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I will be (Ehyeh) hath sent me unto you'. According to this view, Ehyeh is equivalent to Yihyeh or whatever is a more correct form of the name miswritten Jehovah—the revealed name of Israel's God, and Hos. i. 9 is the earliest witness to the true meaning of Ex. iii. 14. 'I am no longer Ehyeh for you' will thus be a contrast to 'I will save Judah as the Lord (Yahveh=Yihyeh) their God' (*v.* 7). It is however doubtful whether Hosea shews acquaintance elsewhere with the document to which Ex. iii. 14 belongs, and at any rate it is more natural to suppose, as A. V. (after Yefet the Karaite) has done that *lēlōhīm* '(for) God' has dropped out of the text.

10, 11. There is a great difference among authorities as to the way in which these verses and ii. 1 should be connected with the context. (*a*) Those who consult a Hebrew Bible will most probably find the first chapter of Hosea closed at *v.* 9, and the second opened with *v'hāyāh* 'and it shall come to pass'. Thus Hosea's (like Isaiah's) first prophetic discourse is made to begin with a promise. The objection is that the transition from *v.* 3 to *v.* 4 of the chapter thus produced is unique for its abruptness even in the Book of Hosea. ('Say ye to your brethren,

[1] *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, Jan. 1876, pp. 153—165.

your *God*. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall 10
be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor
numbered; and it shall come to pass, *that* in the

My people', and directly after, 'Plead with your mother, plead'.) (*b*) Still more objectionable is the arrangement of A. V., derived from one form of the Hebrew text, and followed by the Septuagint, Luther, and Calvin. Its only justification lies in the accidental circumstance that two successive verses in the Hebrew text begin with an imperative. Verse 1 chap. ii. in A. V. is utterly unintelligible by itself, and the transition from the first to the second imperative becomes even more strikingly abrupt than in the Hebrew Bible. (*c*) Feeling these objections, Ewald and Pusey propose to begin the second chapter of the book with the verse which stands fourth in order in our Hebrew Bibles. But most readers cannot help seeing that the transition from threatening to promise, from Lo-ammi, to Ammi, is singularly abrupt, and not to be admitted except from dire necessity. (*d*) The transposition of lines or sentences is well known to be a fruitful source of error in ancient texts. Hence it has been suggested that *vv.* 1—3 of chap. ii. in the common Hebrew Bible (i.e. the last two verses of chap. i. and the first of chap. ii. in A. V.) originally stood at the end of chap. ii. The plausibility of this suggestion of Heilprin's and Steiner's would be seen to most advantage, if these verses could be explained at the end of chap. ii. This would be only following the precedent of St Paul, who adopts a very similar arragement in Rom. ix. 25, 26. (Verse 9 therefore should be taken as the close of chap. i., and ii. 1 as the *close* of chap. ii.)

10—ii. 1. PREDICTED ALTERATION OF NAMES.

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be] However sad the present prospects of Israel may be, a glorious future is in store for him. So our translators mean us to interpret the passage, confounding the province of the translator with that of the expositor. The Hebrew merely says, **And it shall come to pass that the number of the children of Israel shall be**, &c. In all probability, this verse should have come after ii. 23, to the opening statement of which it gives a further development. 'I will sow her for myself in the land,' were the words of Jehovah in reversing the prophetic import of the name Jezreel. Now the Divine speaker assures us that the 'sowing' shall be followed by a rich harvest of inhabitants. An increase in population is elsewhere also a leading feature in the promised prosperity of Israel; e.g. (not to quote the disputed passage, Is. ix. 3), Mic. ii. 12, where the restored remnant is said to be 'tumultuous for the multitude of men'. Observe that the blessing is at first limited in its scope (as it is again in chap. xiv.). 'Children of Israel' means evidently, not all Israel, but the northern kingdom, for in the next verse (comp. i. 6, 7) 'the children of Israel' are clearly distinguished from 'the children of Judah'. The limitation was natural, because the prophet belonged to the northern and larger section of the nation; the horizon is widened immediately after, so as to include Judah.

as the sand of the sea] Comp. Gen. xxii. 17, xxxii. 12.

place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people, *there* it shall be said unto them, *Ye are*
11 the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great *shall be* the day of Jezreel.

in the place where it was said unto them] This may mean either Palestine, or, more plausibly, the land of captivity. But surely the fact, and not the place, of restoration is the thought which fills the mind of the prophet. The sense is much improved by adopting the alternative version, **instead of its being said**, &c. It is true that an indisputable parallel for the sense 'instead of' is wanting, neither Isa. xxxiii. 21 nor 2 Kings xxi. 19 being decisive. But grammatical theory raises no objection to the proposed rendering, and where this is the case the Hebrew concordance must not override the exercise of exegetical tact.

Ye are not my people] Or, **Ye are Lo-ammi**.

the sons of the living God] 'The living God', as 1 Sam. xvii. 26, Deut. v. 26, in contrast to the idol-gods (*'elilim*, or 'nothings', as Isaiah delights to call them): one of the earliest appearances of prophetic monotheism (see on ii. 10). Notice the bold expression 'sons'. At the foundation of popular Semitic religion (the religion of the group of nations to which the Assyrians and the Syrians, the Israelites and the Arabs equally belonged) lay the materialistic idea that the worshipping nation was the offspring of the patron-divinity. Hosea allows and adopts the expression, but signifies by it a moral kinship rather than a physical one. Compare the remarkable passages in Num. xxi. 29, Mal. ii. 11, and see note on xi. 1.

11. *Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together*] Thus the schism of north and south shall be healed (comp. Isa. xi. 13, Ezek. xxxvii. 22)—a schism to which by implication Hosea denies the Divine sanction, on the ground (we may suppose) that Jehovah being one, His people must also be one. See on iii. 4, and comp. iii. 3, viii. 4, xiii. 10, 11. In the last passage, however, Jehovah is represented as in a certain sense sanctioning the usurping dynasties of Israel ('in His anger'), and in the idealizing description which follows (chap. xiv.) Judah seems to find no place

appoint themselves one head] The 'one head' is doubtless the Davidic king (iii. 5).

come up out of the land] The recruited people, too numerous for 'the land to bear them', shall seek to enlarge their territory (comp. Am. ix. 12, Isa. xi. 14, Mic. ii. 12, 13). The 'land' spoken of can only be Palestine, since there is nothing in the context to suggest that either the land of captivity (as Kimchi, following the Targum) or the earth in general is intended. 'Come up' should rather be **go up**, i.e. march to battle, as Nah. ii. 2, Joel i. 6, and often.

for great shall be the day of Jezreel] The result of the warlike enterprise of Judah and Israel is not expressly mentioned, but the addition

Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; 2
And to your sisters, Ruhamah.
Plead with your mother, plead: 2
For she *is* not my wife, neither *am* I her husband:

of these words permits no doubt of its success. Hosea means by the phrase, not the day on which Jehu's guilty dynasty shall be cut short; for the name Jezreel has now been freed from all gloomy associations, and become a title of the regenerate people of Israel. Besides, in phrases like 'the day of Jezreel', the name is always either that of a person, or of a place, or a city personified.

Chap. II.

1. The parallel lines here seem misleading.

Say ye...] Now that the storm-cloud has rolled away, those names of baleful import Lo-ammi and Lo-ruhamah have ceased to be admissible, and are altered into the direct opposites. The verse is best understood as the *conclusion* of chap. ii., just as 'Call his name Lo-ammi', &c. ought to form the conclusion of chap. i. The persons addressed are perhaps the disciples of the prophet, who are directed to communicate the joyful news summed up in the names Ammi ('my people') and Ruhamah ('she hath found compassion') to the whole nation.

2—23, i. 10, 11, ii. 1. Hosea's first discourse, slightly obscured by the dislocation of some of its verses (see above on i. 10, 11). The prophet sets forth in more intelligible language what he has already suggested rather enigmatically. The finest part of the chapter is from *v.* 14 to *v.* 23, where Hosea shows how Israel will emerge purified from her captivity, and enjoy the love and favour of her Divine Bridegroom.

2—7. The prophecy begins with a solemn admonition on the faithless conduct of Israel towards her Divine Bridegroom. The *dramatis personæ* are the same as in chap. i.; only, whereas in chap. i. the husband, wife, and children, are both historical persons and significant symbols, in chap. ii. they are obviously pure allegories. Israel becomes the adulterous wife, and Jehovah the aggrieved husband. The individual Israelites are the children. The appeal of Jehovah to the latter implies that they have not altogether given way to their inherited propensities; they can still be expected, at least in some cases, to co-operate for the extinction of a corrupt worship. Comp. 1 Kings xix. 18 'seven thousand in Israel...which have not bowed unto the Baal'.

2. *Plead with your mother, plead*] The repetition of the appeal shews its urgency. 'Do not murmur against me', Jehovah seems to say, 'plead your cause against your own mother: Israel is the author of her own calamities.'

for she is not my wife...] A parenthetical explanation of the expression 'your mother'. Adultery has destroyed the relation of the wife to the husband, but not of the mother to the children. Comp. Isa. l. 1.

Let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight,
And her adulteries from between her breasts;
3 Lest I strip her naked, and set her as *in* the day that she was born,
And make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land,
And slay her with thirst.
4 And I will not have mercy upon her children;

her whoredoms out of her sight] Rather, **from her face**, the index of obstinacy (comp. Jer. iii. 3), as the breasts of shamelessness.

3. *Lest I strip her naked...*] So far the punishment of the adulteress agrees with that customary among the Germans (Tac. *Germ.* §§ 18, 19). But the punishment of the Hebrew adulteress is not intended to stop here; death was the penalty she had to fear—death by strangling, according to the Rabbinical explanation of Lev. xx. 10, Deut. xxii. 22, death by stoning, according to Ezekiel in a passage which alludes to the present (Ezek. xvi. 39, 40, comp. John viii. 5). But the prophet speaks here of neither form of punishment, but of death by thirst in the desert. The meaning of the allegory is, that the people of N. Israel shall be put to open shame, and deprived of the rich temporal blessings vouchsafed to them. At the beginning of Israel's history, we see her, as it were, a homeless wanderer in the wilderness, with nothing either in her nature or in her surroundings to promise a longer existence than was enjoyed by many another of the Semitic pastoral tribes (comp. Ezek. xvi. 5), and the close of her history, says the prophet, shall present an exactly similar picture. Observe in passing how nearly the ideas of 'land' and 'people' cover each other in the mind of Hosea. In fact, in the mythic stage of religion (from which Hosea's countrymen had not as yet for the most part emerged), it was the land which was imagined as in direct relation to the deity, the people being only so related in virtue of their dwelling in the land. They were in fact the children of the land (comp. Ezek. xiv. 15 'bereave it,' viz. the land); nationality, land, and religion were three inseparable ideas. Hence, though Hosea begins with the figure of disclothing, he glides insensibly into forms of expression appropriate to a land. 'Lest I make her as the wilderness, and set her as a dry land, and slay her with thirst.' The latter expression could of course be used of a wanderer in the desert, but was also allowable of a desolate region (see Ezek. xix. 13, and comp. Koran xxx. 18).

4. *And upon her children...*] No bar shall be opposed, Jehovah declares, to the natural consequence of a corrupt and corrupting religion. Israel, as an independent nation, must at least for a time cease to be. It appears then that the appeal in ver. 4 was uttered as a forlorn hope. All but a few of the Israelites were too far gone to desire to cooperate in a reformation. They were the 'children of

For they *be the* children of whoredoms.
For their mother hath played the harlot: 5
She that conceived them hath done shamefully:
For she said, I will go after my lovers,
That give *me* my bread and my water,
My wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.
Therefore behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, 6
And make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.
And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not 7
overtake them;
And she shall seek them, but shall not find *them:*
Then shall she say, I will go and return to my first
husband;

whoredom', not merely as the children of idolaters, but as idolaters themselves.

5. *I will go after my lovers...*] Israel, then, had given up the true Jehovah for 'lovers' (i.e. not, as the Targum explains it, and as the phrase often means, especially in Ezekiel, the neighbouring peoples whose favour was courted by the Israelites, but, as *vv.* 10, 15 suggest, the Baalim).

mine oil and my drink] Rather, **drinks** (as margin), i.e. wine and various fermented liquors made from fruits such as the date, the mulberry, the fig, and the dried raisin (see Tristram, *Natural Hist. of Bible*, p. 412). Observe the influence of the primitive idea that the land (rather than the people) was in mystic relation to Jehovah; see on *vv.* 21, 22.

6. *I will hedge up thy way with thorns*] Notice how, in the excitement of anger, the person changes from the second to the third. The figure is that of a traveller, who has not indeed lost his way, but finds it shut up by a thorn-hedge planted right across it, and by a wall, which formerly could be scaled through a breach, but is now solidly built up. Job iii. 23, xix. 8 and Lam. iii. 7, 9 are strikingly parallel. The reality signified is of course some dark calamity utterly paralyzing the vital powers. In the second line render **a wall for her** (lit., 'her wall').

7. *not overtake...not find them*] Because the sense of the mystic nearness of the Baalim, formerly enjoyed by their worshippers, will have disappeared together with the prosperity which they were imagined to have granted; prayers and sacrifices will have lost their supposed efficacy.

I will go and return] Rather, **Let me go and return.** A resolution which strikingly resembles that of the Jews in Upper Egypt in the time of Jeremiah, who persisted in worshipping the Queen of Heaven, on the ground that when they had worshipped her in former times 'they had plenty of food, and were well, and saw no evil' (Jer. xliv. 17). Israel's language here reminds us of a later parallel passage (vi. 1—3);

For then *was it* better with me than now.

8 For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil,
And multiplied her silver and gold,
Which they prepared for Baal.

9 Therefore will I return, and take *away* my corn in the time thereof,
And my wine in the season thereof,
And will recover my wool and my flax *given* to cover her nakedness.

it is not so much the expression of penitence, as of a longing to escape from the sense of misery.

then was it better with me than now] For, after all, Israel was better off materially at the opening of her national existence. She had not indeed as yet appropriated the good things of Canaanitish civilization; but her independence was secured, and she had a bright horizon of hope.

8—13. The offended Husband describes the compulsion which he will employ towards his faithless wife.

8. *For she did not know that I...*] Rather, **and she** (the recipient of such favours) **hath not taken notice that it was I who gave her the corn, and the new wine, and the fresh oil.** Corn, new wine, and fresh oil, are the three great material blessings of the land of Canaan (see Deut. vii. 13, xi. 14, xii. 17, &c.).

silver and gold] The fruits of commerce, then, are also the gifts of Jehovah (contrast the language of Isaiah in a different mood, Isa. ii. 7). The riches of N. Israel are testified to by the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser II., where 'silver and gold, bowls of gold, cups of gold, bottles of gold, vessels of gold' are mentioned in the tribute paid by *Yahua habal Khumri* (Jehu, son of Omri) to the Assyrian king.

which they prepared for Baal] Rather, **which they have used in the service of the Baal,** (i.e. the pretended Baal or 'lord' whom they worship). This *may* allude partly to the overlaying of images with silver and gold, as was the practice in Judah in the time of Isaiah (Isa. xxx. 22), but no doubt refers chiefly to the molten images in the form of a calf (i.e. a small bull), which the first Jeroboam placed on the *bāmōth* or high places at Bethel and at Dan, and doubtless elsewhere. It is possible, however, to render 'and who multiplied silver for her, and gold, which (viz. which gold) they have used,' &c. In this case the reference will be exclusively to the golden bulls. This view is favoured by the Hebrew accentuation.

9. And now in order radically to cure the Israelites of this error (viz. that their good things have come from the Baals) the people are for a time to be deprived of these blessings.

return and take away] Rather, **take back again.**

my corn...my wine...my wool...my flax] For though Israel may

And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, 10
And none shall deliver her out of mine hand,
I will also cause all her mirth to cease, 11
Her feast *days*, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.
And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, 12

speak, as in *v.* 7, of '*my* bread and *my* water,' these things were really the property of Jehovah, who could withdraw them at any moment, even in the 'time' or season of the corn and the new wine, when the husbandman was counting implicitly on the harvest and the vintage.

recover] Or, **rescue**, viz. from the misuse to which these gifts would be put by the idolaters.

given to cover her nakedness] Thus reminding Israel that in her natural condition she was utterly helpless and destitute. Comp. Ezek. xvi. 8, which evidently alludes to this passage.

10. *in the sight of her lovers*] Note here that the prophet *seems* to admit the real existence of the Baalim. *Seems*, but only seems; for in iv. 12 he describes the popular oracles as 'stocks,' and in xiv. 3 he describes it as folly to say 'to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods.' Hosea's language here is probably poetically free, just as in Ps. xcvi. 4 a psalmist declares that Jehovah is 'to be feared above all gods' (*'elōhīm*), though he adds in *v.* 5 that 'all the gods of the nations are but *'elīlīm* 'nothings' or 'not-gods.' The later prophets are more emphatically monotheistic (see Introduction, part v., and comp. on i. 10).

11. *her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths*] (The Hebrew has the singular, 'her feast-day' &c.) These expressions are remarkable, for Hosea is a prophet of northern Israel. It would appear, then, that the separation of north and south did not involve a discontinuance of the festivals in the north (see ix. 5). Amos had already predicted the ruin of the 'feasts' in N. Israel (Amos viii. 10). In addition to the 'feasts' which are doubtless those mentioned in the earliest body of legislation (Ex. xxiii. 14, &c., xxxiv. 18, &c.), Hosea specifies the new moon and the sabbath (comp. 2 Kings iv. 23) as passing away together with the national independence. This was not strictly speaking the case with regard to the sabbath, which became one great bond of union among the Jews in exile. But the old, popular sabbath of unrestrained joy (comp. Hosea's 'all her mirth') did pass away; the sabbath of Is. lviii. 13 was very different from that which was popularly observed in ancient Israel.

and all her solemn feasts] Or, **festal assemblies.** The term is more comprehensive than 'feast'; the Levitical legislation recognizes seven 'festal assemblies', but only three 'feasts' (comp. Lev. xxxiii.).

12. *her vines and her fig-trees*] The Hebrew has 'her vine and her fig-tree'. It would seem as if here, as in Joel i. 7, Israel personified

Where*of* she hath said, These *are* my rewards that my
lovers have given me:
And I will make them a forest,
And the beasts of the field shall eat them.
13 And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, where*in* she
burnt incense to them,

were represented with a vine and a fig-tree, like any individual Israelite (1 Kings iv. 25). But A. V. gives the right sense.

my rewards] The 'hire' or 'reward' of a prostitute is meant (comp. ix. 1, and see on *v.* 5).

a forest] A frequent feature in descriptions of desolation (comp. Isa. v. 6, vii. 23, xxxii. 13; Mic. iii. 12). 'A forest' however is misleading; the word (*ya'ar*) often means low, tangled brushwood (e.g. Cant. ii. 3; Isa. xxi. 13; 1 Sam. xiv. 25, 26). The idea in the prophet's mind is inaccessibility, not stateliness (like that of forest-trees).

the beasts of the field] 'Field'=open country. The enemies of Israel are compared to wild beasts in Isa. lvi. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 25.

13. *I will visit upon her the days of Baalim*] To 'visit' is to examine or take notice of, whether in a favourable sense or the reverse. 'Baalim' should rather be **the Baalim** (the various local Baals). Hosea has referred to the holydays of Jehovah (*v.* 11); now he complains of the holydays of the Baalim, which, there is reason to think, are, in name at least, the same holydays as those of the more spiritual worshippers of Jehovah (new moons, sabbaths, and festal assemblies), but differing from these in the total absence of a spiritual element. They are in fact nothing better than sensual merry-makings and displays of finery such as the heathen loved at the turning-points of the agricultural year. But what does Hosea mean by 'the Baalim'? Certainly not, as some have supposed, statues of a god distinct from Jehovah called Baal—a view which is opposed by *v.* 19, 'I will take away the *names* (not, the name) of the Baalim out of thy mouth'. The comparison of another Semitic religious vocabulary will here, as so often, facilitate our exegesis. With the Phœnicians the word Baal, 'lord', was an appellative term for a god, and was used as well for any local as for the national deity. It occurs in the phrase 'Melkart, Baal of Tyre' in the bilingual inscription on two candelabra known as Melitensis prima; and if we only had Canaanitish and Israelitish inscriptions we should doubtless find that the Canaanitish and popular Israelitish usage was identical with that of the Phœnicians. What Hosea does mean by 'the Baalim' is the varieties of the one national deity specially worshipped in different Israelitish localities, such as Baal-Hamon, Baal-Hazor, Baal-Shalisha, Baal-Tamar, &c. In spite of the name Baal (see on *v.* 16) it was Jehovah who was worshipped at the 'high places,' just as in Mohammedan Syria it is Allah who, in name at least, receives the adoration of the *fellâhîn*. But the worship was, from Hosea's point of view, a purely nominal one, just as the worship of Allah by

And she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels,
And she went after her lovers, and forgat me, saith the LORD.
Therefore behold, I *will* allure her, 14

the *fellâhîn* is mixed up with many most un-Mohammedan elements. The Israelites of the north looked upon the Baalim as the givers of their bread and their water, their oil and their 'drinks'; in short, as in no essential respect different from the heathen Baalim of the Canaanites. This was, no doubt, a backsliding from the spiritual truths which seem to be involved in the revelation of Sinai. But it was a backsliding which can be accounted for; it is not to be traced, as the older writers on the Old Testament naïvely traced it, to a peculiar wickedness in the primitive Israelites. A fusion of the religion brought by the Israelites from Sinai with the religion found by them in Canaan, was, humanly speaking, inevitable; partly because from prehistoric times the Hebrews, equally with the Canaanites had used the term Baal, 'lord', as an appellative for a deity, and partly because, like the Cuthæan colonists of the cities of Samaria, they thought it essential to learn 'the manner (rather, religion) of the god of the land' (2 Kings xvii. 26), since the national prosperity seemed to depend on the favour of the territorial deities.

burned incense] The word will also cover the burning of sacrifices upon the altar, as Lev. i. 9, 17, &c. Comp. Ps. lxvi. 15 'incense [or, the sweet smoke] of rams.'

her earrings and her jewels] Rather, **her nose-ring** (as only one ring is mentioned, and there is no evidence that Hebrew ladies had a store of these articles), as Gen. xxiv. 47, **and her necklace** (as Prov. xxv. 12). Popular religious ideas required such ornaments for holy days. See Ex. iii. 21, 22 (comp. *v.* 18), and *Korán*, Sura xx. 61 'on the day of ornament' (*i.e.* at the festival).

14—23. And now the notes of threatening are dying away; bright and glorious days are announced for both sections of the nation. There shall be a second Exodus; no more idolatry; no more war; no cloud upon Israel's relation to her God. (Notice in passing the limitations of this stage of religious knowledge; the Messianic hope is as yet confined entirely to the people of Israel.)

14. *Therefore*] i.e. because, without Jehovah's help, Israel will never come to herself, and reform (comp. Isa. xxx. 18). Her punishment has an educational object; the threat has a tinge of promise.

I will allure her...] The pronoun is expressed in the Hebrew. *I* have not forgotten her, though she has forgotten me. 'Allure her' seems out of place in introducing the punishment; generally the exile is described as an expulsion (comp. Jer. viii. 3). Either we must read with Buhl, 'I will loose her bonds' (*m'fattekhāh*, cf. Jer. xl. 4), or we must suppose a violation of natural order such as occurs now and then in Hebrew, so that the 'alluring' may refer to the cordial address of Jehovah spoken of afterwards. Kimchi explains, 'I will put into her heart to return, while she is yet in exile'. How beautifully the promise

And bring her *into* the wilderness,
And speak comfortably unto her.
15 And I will give her her vineyards from thence,
And the valley of Achor for a door of hope:
And she shall sing there, as *in* the days of her youth,
And as *in* the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.
16 And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, *that* thou shalt call *me* Ishi;
And shalt call me no more Baali.

anticipates the great prophecy of Israel's restoration, which opens, remarkably enough, with the very phrase used by Hosea, 'Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem' (Is. xl. 2). [According to another explanation of the passage which goes back to St Jerome, the wilderness is not only a place of affliction, but one of hope. The latter sense seems to be opposed by a passage in Ezekiel (xx. 33—38) which is evidently a reminiscence of our passage, and which refers to the wilderness exclusively as a place of punishment. Keil, on the other hand, thinks that Israel is to be led into the wilderness, not for punishment, but for deliverance from bondage. This certainly explains the 'I will *allure* her,' but is not consistent with the next verse, in which allusion is made to the punishment undergone in the wilderness. Comp. on xiii. 10.]

into the wilderness] By 'wilderness' Hosea means not merely the desert which lay between Canaan and the land of captivity, but the captivity or exile itself. Sojourn in a heathen land appeared to pious Israelites like a wandering in the desert (comp. Isa. xli. 17).

speak comfortably unto her] Lit., 'speak unto her heart'.

15. *I will give her her vineyards from thence*] So soon as she has left the wilderness ('from thence'), Jehovah will restore to her the vineyards which he had taken away (*v.* 12).

the valley of Achor for a door of hope] Whereas the first Israelites had to call their first encampment after crossing the Jordan the valley of Achor or 'Troubling' (Josh. vii. 26), their descendants shall find the same spot a starting point for a career of success. Another prophet praises the same valley for its fertility (Is. lxv. 10).

she shall sing there] Or, 'thereupon'. Alluding to the songs of Moses and Miriam in Ex. xv. 1 (see *v.* 21, where, as St Jerome with Jewish writers points out, the same verb is used of Miriam's 'answering' the song of Moses). But antiphonal singing is not suitable here, and much less in *vv.* 23—25 (where A. V. arbitrarily alters the rendering of the verb). Render, **she shall respond there.** Theod. ἀποκριθήσεται, Aq. ὑπακούσει (scil. τῷ Κυρίῳ). But Hebrew grammar is more consulted by adopting Buhl's emendation, '*she shall go up* (*'alĕthāh*) thither' (i.e. homewards), as in 'the days of her youth' (comp. Jer. ii. 2), when she came out of Egypt.

16. *thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali*] The

For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, 17
And they shall no more be remembered by their name.
And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, 18
And with the fowls of heaven, and *with* the creeping things of the ground:
And I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth,

terms Ishi, 'my husband', and Baali, 'my lord', are properly speaking synonymous, so that, but for the association of Baal with a false religion, Jehovah as the Bridegroom of Israel might quite innocently be addressed as Baali. The occurrence of Baal in the proper names of families of patriots like Saul, David, Jonathan, Joash (the father of Jerubbaal), and indeed merely such a name as Bealiah, 'Jehovah is Baal' (1 Chron. xii. 5), shew that Jehovah was actually so addressed in the earlier period of Israelitish history. The danger however to the religious purity of Israel was, as we have seen (on *v.* 13), very great, and Hosea naturally refused to recognize in Jehovah-Baal the spiritual deity to whom his own allegiance was sworn. Our prophet was therefore the continuator of the work of Elijah. The Phœnicized Baal-cultus of Ahab was doubtless more corrupt than that which Hosea had to deal with, but the spiritual perceptions of Hosea were sharpened by a fuller training than that which the older prophet had enjoyed. It is remarkable, as an instance of the freedom with which a later prophet could allowably treat an earlier one (a freedom which reminds us of the treatment of the Law of Moses by our Lord), that Jeremiah actually uses the verb *bā'al*, 'to be a lord or husband', of Jehovah (Jer. xxxi. 22).

17. *I will take away the names of the Baalim*] Tenacious as the popular memory is, the unholy names shall be expunged from it. 'Remembered' should be **mentioned**; comp. Josh. xxiii. 7; Ps. xvi. 4, and especially the reminiscence of our passage in Zech. xiii. 2 (where 'the idols' has taken the place of 'the Baalim'). 'Out of her mouth', a change of person for the sake of variety.

18. *I will make a covenant...*] The language reminds us of Zech. xi. 10, where Jehovah 'breaks his covenant which he has made with all the peoples', restraining them from injuring the Israelites, and still more of Ezek. xxxiv. 25 (evidently based on this passage). The 'covenant' (Heb. *b'rīth*) is in fact an ordinance imposed by Jehovah; it is not correct to say that it is a 'treaty' between Israel and the wild beasts. Probably 'ordinance' is the original meaning, which was afterwards widened into 'covenant'. Comp. vi. 7; Deut. xxxiii. 9; 2 Kings xi. 4; Jer. xi. 6; Job xxxi. 1; Ps. cv. 10.

and I will break...out of the earth] Comp. Ps. xlvi. 9. But the context requires the rendering, **out of the land.** All the 'equipment of war' (see on i. 7) of Israel's enemies shall be destroyed (comp. Ps. lxxvi. 3).

And will make them to lie down safely.
19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever;
Yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment,
And in lovingkindness, and in mercies.
20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness:
And thou shalt know the LORD.
21 And it shall come to pass in that day,
I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens,

19. *I will betroth thee unto me*] A second marriage-ceremony among the Israelites had to be preceded by a second betrothal. Jehovah promises here that *this* betrothal shall be 'for ever', i.e., that no differences shall destroy the mutual harmony between Jehovah and His people, (comp. Jer. xxxi. 35—37; Is. liv. 8—10). Righteousness and justice, &c. shall be as it were the bond which unites the pair. The triple mention of the betrothal indicates the solemnity of the act.

20. *and thou shalt know the LORD*] The 'knowledge' of Jehovah is repeatedly insisted upon by Hosea (see iv. 1, v. 4, vi. 3, 6); not however a merely intellectual one, but that which rests upon spiritual experience, and results in moral practice. Such experience was lacking in Hosea's countrymen; 'the spirit of whoredom is in the midst of them, and they have not known Jehovah' (v. 4). It was natural to describe as an element of the realized ideal that Jehovah's people should at last 'know' him. How much weaker is the alternative reading, 'know that I am the LORD', though supported by the precious Babylonian codex, as well as by the Vulgate!

21, 22. *I will hear...*] Rather, **I will respond** (and similarly throughout). It is a beautiful picture of the harmony between the physical and the spiritual spheres, Jezreel (i.e. Israel, see next verse) asks its plants to germinate; they call upon the earth for its juices; the earth beseeches heaven for rain; heaven supplicates for the divine word which opens its stores; and Jehovah responds in faithful love. The idea is that of Am. ix. 13; Joel iii. 18, but it is expressed in an unusual manner. Striking parallels have been quoted from Euripides and Æschylus (fragments beginning respectively

Ἐρᾷ μὲν ὄμβρου γαῖ', ὅταν ξηρὸν πέδον
and Ἐρᾷ μὲν ἁγνὸς οὐρανὸς τρῶσαι χθόνα);

but we need not have recourse for illustrations to classical literature. The prophets and psalmists have no scruple in adopting and spiritualizing popular (i.e. heathenish) Semitic modes of thought. One of the most prevalent of these modes of thought is referred to by Hosea both in this chapter and in i. 2. The heathen Semitic deities were the productive powers of nature, and were grouped in couples of male and female principles, known in the middle zone of Semitic countries as Baal and Baalath (=Baaltis), Baal and Ashérah (see note in Introd., part II.), and Ashtar (or Ashtor) and Ashtoreth (or Astarte). It was

And they shall hear the earth ;
And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the 22
oil ;
And they shall hear Jezreel.
And I will sow her unto me in the earth ; 23
And I will have mercy upon her that had not
obtained mercy;

believed that the fruitful earth was the issue of this union; or, by a variation of the same myth, that the earth itself was the female principle. Hence the idea that the land (see i. 2. and comp. the expressions in *vv.* 5, 9), and, by a later inference, the people of Israel, were the offspring or the spouse of their God was a truism to the hearers of the prophet; but that divine sonship was not physical but moral (see below, on xi. 1), and that the nation's Bridegroom could even divorce his spouse—these were strange and offensive ideas. The latter indeed was so inconceivable that Hosea was directed to explain it by allegorizing a distressing episode in his own history. We must not omit to notice in conclusion that the adaptation of mythic and therefore strictly speaking heathenish forms of speech is not confined to the records of revealed religion. The Arabic vocabulary of Mohammedan times contains a group of parallel expressions which may pertinently be referred to here. Thus, for instance *ba'lī* and *'aththarī* or *'atharī* are used of land which is watered from heaven (i.e., by rain and not by springs), and these, being derivatives of the Arabic forms of the divine names Baal and Ashtar, imply the very same myth which has been mentioned above. So too both in Talmudic Hebrew and in Arabic 'field, or land of Baal' means land which has no need of irrigation, and *ba'l* in Arabic, according to Lane, any seed-produce only watered by the rain. (See Prof. Robertson Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 172, 409, Cheyne, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, Vol. II. p. 295 =282 ed. 2). These significant phrases throw a fresh light, not only (as Prof. Smith has shown) on Hosea, but also on the language of Isa. xlv. 8, 'Shower, ye heavens from above...let the earth open, and let them (viz. heaven and earth) bear the fruit of salvation'.

Jezreel] In i. 4 Jezreel was only mentioned for its historical associations, without any reference to the meaning of its name. Here however it evidently has a symbolic value, viz. 'God sows (it)'.

23. *And I will sow her unto me in the earth*] Rather, **in the land**. Jehovah declares that Jezreel shall verify her name (*her* name, for Jezreel means restored Israel) by being sown anew in the promised land. (Similarly Jeremiah, see xxxi. 27, 28). Thus one of the symbolic names of chap. i. is not indeed changed, but transformed by interpretation. The other names are absolutely reversed. 'Unto me', because while they were outside 'Jehovah's land', the relations of Jehovah to Israel seemed interrupted.

I will have mercy upon.....] Rather, **I will compassionate Uncompassionated** [Lo-ruhamah], **and to Not-my-people** [Lo-ammi] **I will**

And I will say to *them which were* not my
people, Thou *art* my people;
And they shall say, *Thou art* my God.

3 Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman
beloved of *her* friend, yet an adulteress, according to the
love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to
2 other gods, and love flagons of wine. So I bought her to

say, Thou art My-people [Ammi]; **and he** (viz. Not-my-people) **shall say, My God!** St Paul's quotation in Rom. ix. 25 (in a form which differs both from the Hebrew and from the Septuagint) has been already referred to in illustration of a critical hypothesis (see on i. 10, 11). A post-exile prophecy also contains an unmistakable allusion to this passage (Zech. xiii. 9, end). Applications like these shew how great was the *posthumous* influence of the prophets.

CH. III. THE SECOND PART OF THE PARABLE OF HOSEA'S FAMILY-LIFE.

1. *Go yet, love*] Rather, **Once more go love,** indicating that the narrative dropped at i. 9 is now resumed. (Notice also in this connexion the change of the third person into the first in chap. iii.) It is the same woman who is meant; otherwise a different form of expression would have been used (like that in i. 2), besides which the allegory would have been spoiled had there been two women concerned. Gomer is throughout the symbol of faithless but not forsaken Israel. The narrative is told in a condensed allusive style, which makes some demand on the imagination of the reader. If Gomer is to be taken back, it is clear that she must have left her husband, and the price at which (*v.* 2) she has to be brought back shews that she had fallen into depths of misery.

beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress] Rather, **beloved of a paramour, and an adulteress.** As if Jehovah had said, Love her just as she is; the definition is added for the reader's sake, to show how great an act was demanded of Hosea, like 'Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest' (Gen. xxii. 2). For the rendering 'paramour', comp. Jer. iii. 20; Lam. i. 2.

who look...] Rather, **whereas they** (on their side) **turn.**

flagons of wine] Rather, **cakes of grapes.** Cakes of dried grapes were common articles of food, mentioned with cakes of figs, bread, and wine, and parched corn (1 Sam. xxv. 18). The cakes here mentioned, however, must have been of a superior kind; they bear a different name, and appear from Isa. xvi. 7 (corrected translation) to have been considered as luxuries. They formed part of David's royal bounty on the removal of the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. vi. 19), or more correctly of the sacrificial feast implied by the context. This latter point is interesting as it suggests that Baal-worship was closely related to the festivities of the vintage (Prof. Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 434). Hosea too seems to refer to these cakes in connexion with the sacrificial feasts, not without a touch of sarcasm.

me for fifteen *pieces* of silver, and *for* a homer of barley, and a half homer of barley: and I said unto her, Thou shalt 3
abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for *another* man: so *will* I also *be* for thee. For the children of Israel shall abide many days 4

I bought her to me] Why Hosea had to buy his wife back from her paramour, does not appear; had he lost his rights over her by her flight and adultery? Perhaps it was simply to avoid an altercation with the adulterer, or we may imagine such a scene as is depicted by Dean Plumptre in his poem 'Gomer' (*Lazarus*, p. 87). The view of Pococke and Pusey that Hosea means to explain how he undertook to allow his wife just sufficient for a decent maintenance till she should be reinstated in her full position, accounts no doubt for grain being given as well as money, but does violence to the letter of the text, as there is no sufficient proof of the rendering 'I provided her with food'.

for fifteen pieces of silver, and for a homer of barley, and a half-homer of barley] In 2 Kings vii. 18 two seahs of barley are rated at a shekel. This however was immediately after the siege of Samaria had been raised; the normal rate would probably have been lower, say three seahs at a shekel, so that a homer (= 30 seahs) would have cost ten shekels and a homer and a half fifteen. The total price paid by Hosea would therefore be thirty shekels (about £3. 15*s*.) the average value of a slave (see Ex. xxi. 32). Why it was paid partly in money, partly in kind, cannot be determined. Hosea only tells us enough to make the allegory intelligible. Gomer in her misery is a type of Israel in her unhappy alienation from her God.

a half-homer] Strictly, a **lethech**. The Sept. has 'a bottle of wine' (*νέβελ οἴνου*). Probably the translator was unacquainted with the 'lethech', which was apparently not a primitive measure. Its precise relation to the homer is uncertain; A.V. however is borne out by the Jewish tradition. There is nothing analogous to it in the Egyptian dry measure, which in other details agrees exactly with the Hebrew (Révillout, *Revue égyptologique* II. 190).

3. *Thou shalt abide for me many days*] Rather, **shalt sit still** (as Isa. xxx. 7, Jer. viii. 14 in A. V.). Gomer is to lead a quiet secluded life; her licentious course is cut short, and her conjugal intercourse may not yet be resumed. This is to last for 'many days,' i.e. as long as is necessary to assure Hosea of Gomer's moral amendment.

so (*will*) *I also* (*be*) *for thee*] i.e. Hosea plights his troth that he will form no connexion with any other woman but Gomer. 'Ego vicissim tibi fidem meam obligo', Calvin. Others, with Aben Ezra and Kimchi, understand, instead of 'will be', 'will not go in', taking the clause as a contrast to that which precedes ('but I will not go in unto thee'). Ewald renders, 'and yet I am kind unto thee'. It is possible that some short word (such as 'so' or 'not') has dropped out of the text.

4. *For...*] The explanation of this latter part of the prophet's acted allegory. As he has restrained his erring wife from even the

without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and *without*

legitimate gratification of her natural instincts, so Jehovah will chastise idolatrous Israel by depriving her of her civil and religious institutions. By 'the children of Israel' Hosea means the Ten Tribes, as elsewhere in these chapters,

shall abide] Rather, **shall sit still** (as *v.* 3).

many days] The prophet has received no revelation as to the duration of the captivity of the Ten Tribes.

without a king and without a prince] The abolition of 'king and princes' corresponds to the denial of intercourse with her lovers to Gomer. The term 'prince' is used partly of the magnates of the state in general, partly of the 'elders' or heads of families, who played such an important part in the Israelitish community (comp. Ex. iii. 16; 2 Sam. xix. 11; 1 Kings viii. 1, xx. 7; Jer. xxvi. 17). A king and princes are mentioned together again in vii. 3, xiii. 10 (and probably in viii. 10).

without a sacrifice and without an image] The withholding of this and the next pair of objects corresponds to the cessation of conjugal intercourse between Hosea and Gomer. Consequently as Hosea represents Jehovah, the 'image' (or rather consecrated **pillar**, Heb. *maṣṣēbah*) spoken of must stand in some relation to Jehovah, must in fact be of one of those pillars sacred to Jehovah, which, as many think, lasted on in Judah (much more therefore in Israel) at any rate till the time of Hezekiah: see note on x. 1. The 'pillars' were the distinguishing marks of holy places, and are therefore very naturally combined by Hosea with sacrifices or altars (Sept., followed by Pesh. and Vulg. reads 'altar' here instead of 'sacrifice'). Comp. Dean Plumptre:

> No pomp of kings, no priests in gorgeous robes,
> No victims bleeding on the altar-fires,
> No golden ephod set with sparkling gems,
> No pillar speaking of the gate of heaven,
> No Teraphim with strange mysterious gleam
> Shall give their signs oracular. (*Lazarus*, p. 90.)

It follows from this passage of Hosea that the worship of Jehovah in northern Israel presented features altogether alien to the orthodox worship of Jehovah according to the Law, and that Hosea raises no protest against it. He refers to its suspension as a privation corresponding to and equally felt with that of king and princes. We must remember however that the kings of N. Israel were regarded by Hosea as usurpers.

without an ephod] The high priest's ephod is described in Ex. xxviii. 6—14. It was a sleeveless coat of splendid and costly material, and with two ouches of onyx on the shoulders, bound by a rich girdle. Over it was worn the so-called *choshen*, a jewelled breastplate, with the Urim and Thummim. But what connexion had this coat with the sacred 'pillar' and the teraphim? It is as difficult to answer as the question with regard to Gideon's ephod in Judg. viii. 24—27. The

teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and 5
seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall
fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

root-meaning of ephod is simply to overlay, and the feminine form of the word ephod (*aphuddāh*) is used in Isa. xxx. 22 of the gold plating of images. The easiest supposition is that both in Judg. *l.c.* and here 'ephod' means, not an article of sacerdotal dress but an image of Jehovah overlaid with gold or silver (so in Judg. xvii., xviii.; 1 Sam. xxi. 10, xxiii. 6, 9, xxx. 7, 8, but not 1 Sam. ii. 18, xxii. 18). It is no doubt strange to find this idolatry of Jehovah still prevalent among the larger section of the Israelites. But the fact is in harmony with all that Hosea tells us of the religious state of his country elsewhere.

and without teraphim] Ephod and teraphim were evidently used for similar purposes (see Judg. xvii., xviii.). The latter word only occurs in the plural form; the teraphim seem to have been household gods (see Gen. xxxi. 19, 34; 1 Sam. xix. 13, 16), a relic of primitive Semitic ancestor-worship (if we may connect with Assyrian *tarpu*, a word from the same root as Heb. *Rephaim* 'the shades'—see margin of R. V. of Isa. xiv. 9). Certainly no other plausible derivation has been found (see Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 63, 451). Strange that such survivals should occur. Compare, on the general question of fetishism in the Old Testament, Max Müller, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 60). If so, we may connect them with the 'creeping things and beasts and idols (*gillūlīm*) of the house of Israel' which Ezekiel saw 'pourtrayed upon the wall' in the 'chambers of imagery' (Ezek. viii. 10—12). Josiah indeed had attempted to put away 'the teraphim and the *gillūlīm*' (2 Kings xxiii. 24), but in vain; the Jews took them with them into exile. Ezekiel represents the king of Babylon as seeking an oracle from his teraphim (Ezek. xxi. 21); at any rate, this was the principal use of the teraphim to the Israelites—to divine by (Zech. x. 2). The meaning of 'ephod and teraphim' was already forgotten in the time of the Septuagint translator of Hosea, who renders *οὐδὲ ἱερατείας οὐδὲ δήλων* (he identifies the teraphim with the Thummim, comp. Sept. Deut. xxxiii. 8; elsewhere *δῆλα* or *δήλωσις* = the Urim).

5. *return*] i.e. from their evil courses of disobedience to their God and to the legitimate royal house.

David their king] There is a great body of authority for regarding this as an expression for the Messiah. So the Targum took it, so Aben Ezra, and other Jewish writers cited by Pococke. The interpretation rests on the undoubted fact that in Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, xxxvii. 24, 25 'David' means the ideal king of the future who should prove as it were a second David. In all these passages however there is something in the context to determine the reference to a person, and all these passages belong to a later period in the development of the Messianic revelation. The analogy of Am. ix. 11 suggests that what is in Hosea's mind is, not the person of the king, but the dynasty. In short, 'David' = the representative of David. Precisely so

4 Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel:
For the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land,
Because *there is* no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

Rehoboam is still 'David' in 1 Kings xii. 16, and the high priest 'Aaron' in Ps. cxxxiii. 2. Hosea does not sanction the usurping dynasties (see on i. 11).

and shall fear the LORD and his goodness] Rather, **and shall come eagerly to Jehovah and to his goodness** (or, 'to His good things'). 'Come eagerly to' is literally, 'tremble to', but the idea is not that they will tremble at their own unworthiness, but rather 'trement præ gaudio' (as the same verb means in Isa. lx. 8). Comp. the similar expression in xi. 10, where however the idea of speech is included. The parallel passage in Jer. xxxi. 10 proves that the revived love of the Israelites for Jehovah will have 'cast out fear'.

in the latter days] Rather, **in the days to come** (lit., 'in the sequel of the days'); see on Mic. iv. 1. Hosea does not mean to say that this will be the last *αἰὼν* in the course of history; but only that after Israel's captivity, nothing will arise to break the harmony between Jehovah and his people.

CH. IV. ISRAEL'S GROSS MORAL CORRUPTION, ABETTED AND INCREASED BY HIS RELIGIOUS GUIDES.

1—3. The people are summoned to hear whereof Jehovah accuses them, viz. the universal prevalence of the most crying sins. The prophet assures them that this is the true cause of the physical calamity which is becoming more and more general in its range.

1. *ye children of Israel*] The northern kingdom only is addressed (see *v.* 15, where the prophet turns aside to Judah).

the LORD hath a controversy] Jehovah is both plaintiff and judge; comp. xii. 2; Isa. i.

no truth, nor mercy] Or, 'no truthfulness and no kindness.' The Hebrew *khesedh* includes in its wide range of meaning[1] (1) the love of God to man, as Ps. v. 7, (2) the love of man to God, as vi. 4, and (3) brotherly love, or the love of a man to his neighbour, as often. Here the context favours the last of these applications. St Jerome well describes the connexion between the two qualities,—'nec veritas absque misericordiâ sustineri potest, et misericordia absque veritate facit negligentes, unde alterum miscendum est alteri'. In short, truth without love leads to hardness, love without truth to weakness.

nor knowledge of God] This might well have been mentioned first. Moral practice is low, because the heart has no experience of God's personal dealings with it (see on ii. 20).

[1] On the Hebrew words for love, comp. Carl Abel, *Ueber den Begriff der Liebe in einigen alten und neuen Sprachen*, Berlin, 1872, pp. 63.

By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out,
And blood toucheth blood. 2
Therefore shall the land mourn,
And every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, 3
With the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven;
Yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.
Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: 4
For thy people *are* as they that strive with the priest.

2. *By swearing...*] Rather, **(There is nothing but) swearing and lying**, &c. The 'swearing' meant is of course false swearing (x. 4).

break out] Viz. into acts of violence; or, 'break into (houses)', as Job xxiv. 16.

blood toucheth blood] The Hebrew has 'bloods', i.e. bloodshed. The sense is, one deed of blood follows close upon another.

3. *shall the land mourn*] Or, 'doth...continually mourn', for the prophet speaks amidst the anarchical and revolutionary scenes which followed upon the death of Jeroboam II. A severe drought is represented as the punishment of Israel's misdoings. Nature, throughout the prophetic literature, sympathizes with man's sins and sorrows. Comp. Isa. xxiv. 3—6, Am. viii. 8; Jer. xii. 4; Joel i. 18 (where render at end 'suffer punishment').

with the beasts...] Better, **both**, &c. (lit. 'in', i.e. whether consisting of...or of...).

4—6. It is not you, the laity, bad as you are, who are most to blame; do not waste your time in mutual recrimination. The real blame lies with the priests. Jehovah has a solemn word for thee, O priest; thy whole clan are virtually in rebellion against me. For thy penalty, thou shalt suffer one blow after another, (a 'fall' means a calamity), as it were by day and by night; and thine accomplice, the prophet, shall partake in thy punishment. Yea, thy whole stock, priests as well as people, Jehovah will destroy. And why? Because thou, O priest, whose duty it was to teach the life-giving knowledge of God, hast absolutely rejected it thyself. Henceforth thou art no priest of mine.

4. *Yet let no man strive...as they that strive with the priest*] The view of the meaning of this verse suggested by A.V. may be expressed in the words of Henderson. 'All reproof on the part of their friends or neighbours generally would prove fruitless, seeing they had reached a degree of hardihood, which was only equalled by the contumacy of those who refused to obey the priest, when he gave judgment in the name of the Lord, Deut. xvii. 12.' This assumes that the counsel not to strive comes from Jehovah. We might however follow Ewald, who understands the opening words of *v.* 4 to mean that the people 'will not permit any one, even a prophet, to contend with them, although they themselves do not scruple in the least to quarrel with every one, even

5 Therefore shalt thou fall *in* the day,
And the prophet also shall fall with thee *in* the night,
And I will destroy thy mother.
6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge,
Because thou hast rejected knowledge,

with the priest who would admonish them, in spite of the traditional reverence for his office, Deut. xvii. 8—18; Eccl. iv. 17, 18.' The comparison at the end of the verse, when explained thus, is no doubt obscurely expressed, but not more so than that in v. 10, 'the princes of Judah are become like those that remove the bound.' Still there are objections, viz. (1) that in *v.* 6 the second person undoubtedly refers to the priesthood, and why should it be taken differently in *v.* 5? and (2) that in *v.* 6 the priests are so vehemently denounced, that we can hardly suppose that contending with them would be referred to as a sin in *v.* 5. Various conjectures have been proposed for emending the passage. The most plausible is that of Prof. Robertson Smith (*The Prophets of Israel*, p. 406), who for *kim'ribhē* 'as they that strive with', reads *mārū bhī* 'have rebelled against me.' At any rate, we must agree with him and with Mr Heilprin, that the concluding word is a vocative—'O priest.' The view of the meaning of *vv.* 4—6 given in the note before this is based upon this conjecture. 'Priest' here = priestly caste, as 'a prophet' in Deut. xviii. 18 = an order of prophets.

5. *the prophet also*] Hosea of course refers to the lower class of prophets, to whom prophecy was simply a means of livelihood (comp. Mic. iii. 11 and Amaziah's words in Am. vii. 12), and who, like the priests, often came visibly drunk to their most solemn functions (Isa. xxviii. 7). The spiritually-minded prophets of this period do not inveigh against their rivals as false prophets (this term came from the Sept. version of Jeremiah), but as those who prostitute a sacred calling to selfish purposes. Very similar charges are brought against the priests, who are not on that account called false priests, though from the highest point of view they were such.

thy mother] i.e. the stock from which thou springest, i.e. either the entire Israelitish race (comp. ii. 2), or some partly independent portion of that race, not indeed here a city (as 2 Sam. xx. 19; comp. Ps. cxlix. 2), but the caste or clan of the priests (so Prof. Robertson Smith). The expression 'I will also forget *thy children*' (see below) favours the latter view.

6. *My people are destroyed*] The prophet cannot escape, because the people is on the brink of ruin through the prophet's fault. It is the perfect of prophetic certitude, 'my people is already as good as destroyed.'

for lack of knowledge] More precisely, **by reason of (their) lack of knowledge.** The 'knowledge of God' is meant (see on *v.* 1).

thou hast rejected knowledge] *Thou* is emphatically expressed in the Hebrew. 'Knowledge', viz. of God's revealed will, was theoretically a deposit in the priestly order (Deut. xxxiii. 10; Ezek. xliv. 23; Mal. ii. 7).

I will also reject thee, that *thou* shalt be no priest to me :
Seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God,
I will also forget thy children.
As they were increased, so they sinned against me : 7
Therefore will I change their glory into shame.

There is no reason to think that the 'priest-people' of Israel is addressed ; there was no priest-people till after the return from exile.

forgotten...forget] To 'forget' what has been committed to one's charge is the same as to ignore it. The penalty of the priests is not really distinct from that of the people (see *v.* 9); the priestly office could in no full sense be maintained in captivity.

the law of thy God] 'Thy God', because the priest was specially 'brought near' to Jehovah. 'The law', Heb. *tōrāh*, will cover oral as well as written instructions (comp. Deut. xvii. 11), but a later passage (viii. 12) shows that a written legislation existed in Hosea's time. The contents of this may be presumed from Hosea's language to have been, at any rate to a large extent, concerned with applications of religious morality.

thy children] i.e. the members of the priestly caste; 'thy brethren' would be more consistent with the figure (comp. 'thy mother', *v.* 5).

7—10. Here the priests are referred to in the third person; they have been degraded from a great position; how sore must be the punishment!

7. *As they were increased...*] Rather, **The more they increased, the more**, &c. No doubt the priestly caste shared in the general prosperity under Jeroboam II., but the official conscience, torpid to begin with, was only the more deadened. A flagrant example of the sinning of the priests is given in the next verse.

will I change their glory into shame] An ancient various reading (one of the so-called Tikkunē Soferim, on which see the Introductions to the Old Testament) is, 'they have exchanged my glory for shame', i.e. the glory of Jehovah for the shameful worship of Baal. 'To exchange (gods)' or 'to take another in exchange' is a recognized phrase for a lapse into idolatry, and we know that the Jewish scribes sometimes ventured to modify expressions in the Scriptures which they thought too bold or liable to misunderstanding (see Geiger's *Urschrift*). If we do not go so far as to accept the whole of this various reading, it would seem that we must at least accept the correction of the 1st pers. sing. into the 3rd plur. in the verb, rendering **they have exchanged their glory for infamy**; comp. Jer. ii. 11 'my people have exchanged their glory for that which doth not profit' (i.e. idols), Ps. cvi. 20 'they exchanged their glory (v. l. his glory) for the form of an ox.' Still the received reading, already adopted in the versions, gives a good sense, and considered by itself is not less justifiable than the proposed correction. According to it, 'their glory' means, not Jehovah, but the splendour of their position as priests. These verses are important as showing how influential that position was; we could not have inferred this from the scanty references in the historical books.

8 They eat *up* the sin of my people,
And they set their heart on their iniquity.
9 And there shall be, like people, like priest:
And I will punish them for their ways,
And reward them their doings.
10 For they shall eat, and not have enough:
They shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase:
Because they have left off to take heed to the LORD.
11 Whoredom and wine and new wine take *away* the heart.

8. *They eat up the sin of my people*] The subject of the verb is evidently the priests (see *v.* 9), and the phrase can therefore only mean, **they eat the sin-offering of my people** (i.e. the portion assigned to the priests, comp. Lev. x. 17). Here we come into collision with a theory of the radical school of criticism that the Levitical legislation (including the appointment of 'sin-offerings' and 'guilt-offerings') originated after the Babylonian captivity. There are however two earlier references to the sin-offering, viz. here and in Ps. xl. 6, and one to the guilt-offering in Prov. xiv. 9, not to insist on the disputable allusions in Isa. i. 11; Mic. vi. 7; 2 Kings xii. 16 (17). And if the dates of one or another of these passages be challenged, yet the supposed novelties are not referred to at all frequently in undoubtedly post-Captivity writings. Sin-offerings are mentioned twice (Neh. x. 34; 2 Macc. xii. 43); guilt-offerings only once (if we accept a very probable emendation of Ezra x. 19, pointing *ashāmīm*). Next, granting a reference to the sin-offering, does the prophet mean to condemn the priests for eating of it? Certainly not; whatever were the traditional rules respecting the sin-offering, the priests would naturally have a just claim to their portion of the victim. The next clause explains the charge brought against them—it is that (like the sons of Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 13—17) they greedily devoured what the people brought to atone for their sins; so that in eating the 'sin-offering', they also fed upon the 'sin' (the same word, *khattath*, covers both) of Jehovah's people. Instead of trying to stem the tide of iniquity, they long for its onward march, with a view to unholy gains.

set their heart] Literally, 'lift up their soul' (or, 'each one his soul'), i.e. 'direct their desires', as Ps. xxiv. 4, xxv. 1.

9. *like people, like priest*] i.e. the priest shall fare no better than the people. His official 'nearness' to Jehovah shall be no safeguard to him.

I will punish them...] Rather, **punish him**, viz. the priest representing the order.

10. *they shall eat...*] Greed is punished retributively by insufficiency of food (Mic. vi. 14; Lev. xxvi. 26); whoredom by childlessness.

11—14. Thus the priests have led the way, and the people follow. They have lost the spiritual faculty; a wild impulse to the most sensual idolatry has carried them away.

11. *Whoredom*, &c.] 'The heart', not 'their heart' (as the Targum

My people ask *counsel* at their stocks,
And their staff declareth unto them :
For the spirit of whoredoms hath caused *them* to err,
And they have gone a whoring from under their God.
They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains,
And burn incense upon the hills,

and Peshito). It is a moral adage, showing that Hosea was not more inclined than Isaiah to abandon simple moral teaching to the class of 'wise men', who 'sat in the gate' and conveyed practical lessons in the form of proverbs. It is literal whoredom that is meant, as, even apart from *vv.* 13, 14, the juxtaposition with 'wine and new wine' shows. The impure rites of nature-worship had destroyed the reverence for the marriage-bond. **Heart** here means 'the spiritual understanding', 'a heart to know Me' (Jer. xxiv. 7); 'sons of Belial' cannot 'know Jehovah' (2 Sam. ii. 12). For the drunkenness of Samaria comp. Is. xxviii. 1.

12. *My people ask counsel at their stocks*] Lit., 'My people—he asketh counsel at his wood.' Jehovah alone can give oracular 'counsel'; not the teraphim, nor yet the bull-images of Jehovah. The latter did, indeed, seem to the Israelites to bring Jehovah near to their consciousness, but it was not the true Jehovah, who could not be represented by images (viii. 6) and hated the rites of the Israelitish worship (ix. 15); Hosea therefore calls them 'wood'; comp. Hab. ii. 19; Jer. ii. 27, x. 8. There is a touch of melancholy in 'my people'; comp. Isa. iii. 12.

their staff declareth unto them] 'Declareth', with reference to secret things, as Isa. xliii. 9, xliv. 7. The 'staff' is probably the diviner's wand; so in Ezek. xxi. 21 the king of Babylon combines consultation of the teraphim with divination by arrows, which is merely another form of rhabdomanteia (Sept. substitutes 'wands', ῥάβδον, for 'arrows'). Wands were one of the recognized instruments of soothsaying, in both East and West; see Pococke, *Specimen Historiae Arabum*, p. 327; Azraki, *The Chronicles of the city of Mecca*, Arabic and German by Wüstenfeld, I. 73; Herodotus IV. 67; Tacitus, *Germ.* 10. Pococke however thinks 'staff' is synonymous with 'stocks', and that a staff is meant which had an idol carved at the top.

the spirit of whoredoms] i.e. an impulse prompting them to whoredom (in the literal sense, to avoid tautology); comp. 'spirit of perverseness' (Isa. xix. 14), 'spirit of uncleanness' (Zech. xiii. 2), 'spirit of jealousy' (Num. v. 14).

13. *upon the tops of the mountains*] 'Every high hill and every green tree' are repeatedly mentioned together as the scenes of the popular nature-worship (e.g. 1 Kings xiv. 23; 2 Kings xvii. 10; Jer. ii. 20, iii. 6); and, to avoid misunderstanding, it would have been better to supply an 'and' before 'under oaks', &c. The sacred hill-tops were specially selected for being treeless—'bare places' they are called in Jer. iii. 2. 'Elms' should rather be **terebinths** (Tristram, *Natural Hist. of Bible*, p. 350).

Under oaks and poplars and elms,
Because the shadow thereof *is* good:
Therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom,
And your spouses shall commit adultery.
14 I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom,
Nor your spouses when they commit adultery:
For themselves are separated with whores,
And they sacrifice with harlots:
Therefore the people *that* doth not understand shall fall.
15 Though thou, Israel, play the harlot,
Yet let not Judah offend;
And come not ye *unto* Gilgal,

13. *therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom*] (Rather, **do commit**.) Harlotry and idolatry being so inextricably connected, it was only natural that the women should be given up to licentiousness; the more religious they were, the stronger would the evil habit be. For 'spouses', read **daughters-in-law**. The allusion is to the lascivious worship of Ashérah and Ashtóreth (the goddesses were distinct); see next verse. Ashérah or 'the propitious' was at first probably a title of the feminine variety of the Assyrian deity Ishtar. See Introduction.

14. The precedence in guilt belongs to the elders who set so wicked an example.

themselves are separated with] Rather, **they themselves go aside with**. A change of person, instead of 'ye yourselves.'

harlots] Rather, **consecrated harlots**, i.e. women who dedicate themselves, or are dedicated by others, to the service of Ashérah or of Ashtoreth, and give up their chastity in honour of the goddess. Mesha, king of Moab, says that, when he took Nebo from the Israelites, he slew the men, but spared the women in order to devote them to Ashtar-Chemosh (Moabite inscription, lines 16, 17).

sacrifice] Probably the reference is partly to the feast which followed the sacrifice (Ex. xxxii. 6).

shall fall] Rather, **shall be dashed to the ground.**

15—19. Judah is cautioned not to fall into the same ruin as Israel, of which a deterrent picture is given.

15. *offend*] Rather, **become guilty**, viz. by participation in Israel's idolatry.

come not ye unto Gilgal] Gilgal was one of the chief seats of the idolatrous worship of the north, see ix. 15, xii. 11; Am. iv. 4, v. 5. But which of the Gilgals (see Smith's *Bibl. Dict.*) is meant? The Jewish commentators are agreed that it was the famous Gilgal 'in the east border of Jericho' where Joshua pitched his camp for the first time after crossing the Jordan (Josh. iv. 19), and later on 'the true centre of the whole people' (Ewald, *History of Israel*, III. 29). Probably they are right. No doubt, we should have expected this Gilgal

Neither go ye up *to* Beth-aven,
Nor swear, The LORD liveth.
For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: 16
Now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place.
Ephraim *is* joined to idols: 17
Let him alone.

to have belonged to Judah, but the natural boundary of the two kingdoms was not the historical one; 'those places which their past history had rendered most sacred or memorable—Bethel, Gilgal, Jericho —were incorporated in the northern kingdom' (Ewald, *Hist.* IV. 3).

neither go ye up to Beth-aven] A Beth-aven near Bethel is mentioned Josh. vii. 2; 1 Sam. xiii. 5, but this Beth-aven, 'house of vanity', or 'of wickedness', is a keenly sarcastic substitute for the desecrated name Bethel, 'house of God' (see x. 5, 8, and comp. Am. iv. 4, v. 5; 1 Kings xii. 29—33). 'Go ye up', because Bethel was situated on the slopes of a hill, comp. 1 Sam. x. 3, 'going up to the Elohim (i.e. the sacred place) to Bethel.'

nor swear, The LORD liveth] Hosea may mean to say that the oath 'As Jehovah liveth' has been so profaned by the Israelites of the north that he wishes to see it abolished. It is more likely however (considering Deut. x. 20; Jer. iv. 2) that he deprecates oaths by the Jehovahs of Gilgal and Bethel—oaths which in the mind of the swearer are connected with idolatrous symbols of Jehovah, precisely as Amos denounces those who say, 'As thy God, O Dan, liveth', and 'As thy God, O Beer-sheba, liveth' (Am. viii. 14, corrected partly from the Sept.).

16. *slideth back as a backsliding heifer*] Rather, **is stubborn like a stubborn heifer.** A favourite figure of the prophets, xi. 4; Jer. xxxi. 18; comp. Deut. xxxii. 15.

now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place] Israel in the weakness of captivity is compared to a lamb in a large pasture-ground, which is an object of attack to all the wild beasts prowling about—so most commentators explain. But 'a large place' is everywhere else an image for prosperity (see Ps. xviii. 19, xxxi. 8, cxviii. 5), and Isaiah in describing a happy future says, 'in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures (Isa. xxx. 23).' It is much safer, therefore, following Ewald and Hitzig, to take the passage as an incredulous exclamation or question, **this being so, should the Lord feed them as a lamb in a large meadow!** In fact, a prophet would hardly have said that Jehovah shepherded His people during the Dispersion (see Ezek. xxxiv. 11—14), and in the very next verse Jehovah exclaims, 'Let him alone.' On the other hand, the clause, thus translated, fits most naturally into the context,—'Israel is a stubborn heifer, how then should it expect to be treated as kindly as a lamb?'

17. *joined to idols*] The cognate noun is used in Mal. ii. 14 of a wife in her relation to her husband, and in Isa. xliv. 11 of an idol-worshipper in his mystic relation to his god (comp. 1 Cor. x. 20).

18 Their drink is sour; they have committed whoredom
continually:
Her rulers *with* shame do love, Give ye.
19 The wind hath bound her up in her wings,
And they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

18. *Their drink is sour...*] This translation is cannot be sustained philologically. If the text is correct, the only version at once intelligible and philologically sound is, 'Their drunkenness has passed by.' For the rendering of the verb comp. 1 Sam. xv. 32 Hebr., and for 'drunkenness', lit. drink, comp. 1 Sam. i. 14, xxv. 37 (where 'wine' must be synonymous with 'the fumes of wine'). Connecting this clause with the following, we may render (as Henderson, following the Jewish commentator Abarbanel), **When their carousal is over they indulge in lewdness**, i.e. when tired of one sin they plunge without scruple into another. The Sept. rendering ἠρέτισε Χαναναίους is very difficult to justify. The Peshito omits the words. St Jerome explains the whole clause, Factum est, inquit Deus, convivium eorum à me alienum.

her rulers with shame do love, Give ye] Rather, **her shields are enamoured of infamy** (Henderson). This involves a slight change in the points, necessary in order to make sense of the word rendered 'infamy.' Probably, however, as Abp. Secker was the first to infer from Sept. and Pesh., there is an erroneous repetition of three letters (comp. a similar case in Ps. lxxxviii. 17), so that we may render simply, 'her shields love infamy' ('shields' for 'rulers', as Ps. xlvii. 10). The Septuagint, indeed, suggests a various reading which possibly deserves the preference; it renders, ἠγάπησαν ἀτιμίαν ἐκ φρυάγματος αὐτῆς. Here, as in Am. viii. 7, the Greek translator seems to have misunderstood the expression, 'the excellency of Jacob' (i.e. Jehovah). The Hebrew which he had before them may be thus put into English, **they love infamy rather than her Excellency** (or, her Pride, i. e. Jehovah, Israel's God). Φρύαγμα is in fact the rendering of Heb. *gāōn* in Zech. xi. 3 and three other passages.

19. *The wind hath bound her up in her wings*] A figure for the suddenness and violence with which the enemy should carry Israel away into exile (comp. Isa. lvii. 13). The perfect is that of prophetic certitude.

Chap. V.

Interlacing descriptions of guilt and punishment.

1—7. A personal arraignment of the priesthood (accused less directly in chap. iv.) and of the court, who, instead of warning the people, have led them into the snare of sin. So entangled are they in it that they cannot repent, and Judah too has fallen. They may seek to propitiate Jehovah by sacrifices, but in vain: the judgment is close at hand.

Hear ye this, O priests; 5
And hearken, ye house of Israel;
And give ye ear, O house of the king;
For judgment *is* toward you,
Because ye have been a snare on Mizpah,
And a net spread upon Tabor.
And the revolters are profound to make slaughter, 2
Though I *have been* a rebuker of them all.
I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: 3

1. *O priests*] Hosea addresses the priests of the high places in N. Israel.

O house of the king] i.e. the king and his courtiers, whether of the royal family or not.

judgment is toward you] Rather, **the judgment is for you.**

a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor] Tabor is the well-known mountain of the name in Galilee (see Judg. iv. 6), and may be taken as the representative of the region on the west of the Jordan (as Ps. lxxxix. 12); Mizpah (a common name = place of watch) is most probably Mizpah in Gilead (Judg. x. 17, xi. 11, 29), also called Ramoth-Gilead (Josh. xx. 8, xxi. 36; 2 Kings ix. 1, 4, 14), and consecrated by Jacob (Gen. xxxi. 45—54). Probably these places (comp. next note) are mentioned because the idolatrous worship was most dangerously seductive there. The worshippers were like the deluded birds who sought shelter in the woods and ravines (comp. 2 Sam. xxvi. 20; Ps. xi. 1).

2. *And the revolters are profound to make slaughter*] The expressions used have a most un-Hebraic cast, and what can the 'slaughter' refer to? There is nothing at all in the context to suggest that the slaying of sacrifices is meant (as many after St Jerome have supposed), and it is very harsh to understand it as a fresh image for the priests' abuse of their position. It is better to render (changing a Teth into a Tāv), **The apostates are gone deep in corrupting** (comp. ix. 9). The ancient versions already found the passage obscure. The Septuagint (and similarly the Peshito) renders δ (sc. *τὸ δίκτυον*) *οἱ ἀγρεύοντες τὴν θήραν κατέπηξαν*. Possibly they had had a somewhat different text. Certainty is unattainable, and another plausible and easy emendation deserves at least a mention, from its suitableness to the context, **And the pit of Shittim they have made deep.** Having been a station of the camp under Moses and Joshua (Num. xxv. 1; Josh. iii. 1, v. 1), it is probable, though unproved, that Shittim contained one of the popular shrines or holy places.

though I have been a rebuker of them all] Lit., 'and I am chastisement for them all'; comp. Ps. cix. 4 A.V., 'I give myself unto prayer' (lit., 'I am prayer'). This however is very harsh, and it is simpler to transpose two letters and render, **and there is no correction for any of them.**

For now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, *and*
Israel is defiled.
4 They will not frame their doings to turn unto their
God:
For the spirit of whoredoms *is* in the midst of them,
And they have not known the LORD.
5 And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face:
Therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity;
Judah also shall fall with them.

3. *I know Israel*] The pronoun is expressed for emphasis, I who punish Israel am well acquainted with its open and secret sins.

4. *They will not frame...*] Rather, as in the margin, **Their doings will not suffer them to turn unto their God.** The same idea that from the meshes of an inveterate vicious habit there is hardly an escape is expressed in vii. 2, comp. John viii. 34; Rom. vi. 16.

the spirit of whoredoms] See on iv. 12.

is in the midst of them] Rather, **is within them**, i.e. in their inmost being.

have not known] Rather, **know not** (see on ii. 20).

5. *And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face*] Rather, **But... shall testify to his face.** 'The pride of Israel' is capable of two interpretations. It may mean Israel's vainglorious self-confidence, which is so hateful to Jehovah, and as it were testifies against Israel on the day of Jehovah's assize (Isa. ii. 12). But it is more natural to take the phrase as a title of Jehovah (see on iv. 18 'her rulers', &c.), borrowed probably from Am. viii. 7. How does Jehovah 'testify against' any one? The answer is furnished by Ruth i. 21, 'Jehovah hath testified against me, and Shaddai hath afflicted me.' An objection of small weight has been raised, viz. that Jehovah, in the prophetic figure, is the complainant and the judge, but not the witness. The answer is that the Hebrew *'ānāh* is not exactly 'to witness' but 'to meet with words or a declaration'; hence it can be used of a judicial sentence. Hosea means that Jehovah has spoken one of those words which kill (comp. vi. 5)—has delivered a judgment by which Israel shall 'fall.' The rendering 'Israel's pride shall be humbled' adopted in the 'Speaker's Commentary' from the Sept., the Targum, and the Peshito, scarcely suits the following words 'to (lit. in) his face.' Still less suitable is it in vii. 10, where the phrase is repeated.

Israel and Ephraim] i.e., Israel and especially Ephraim; like 'Judah and Jerusalem' (Isa. ii. 1).

shall fall] Rather, **shall stumble.** A figure for calamity (as Isa. viii. 15, xxxi. 3, and often). In iv. 15 the prophet uses less distinct language with regard to Judah's punishment; she is warned not to offend rather than threatened with punishment. Perhaps this chapter represents the utterances of a later period than the preceding chapter.

They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to 6
seek the LORD;
But they shall not find *him;* he hath withdrawn himself
from them.
They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: 7
For they have begotten strange children:
Now shall a month devour them with their portions.
Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, 8
And the trumpet in Ramah:

6. *with their flocks and with their herds*] i.e., with their sacrificial offerings. This passage affords decisive proof (if indeed the converging evidence from other quarters can be held incomplete) that the Israelites of the north simply and in good faith professed to be worshippers of Jehovah. It will be too late, says the prophet, to use the ordinary means of appeasing Jehovah's wrath, which have only a value as the outward signs of penitence and faith (see on vi. 6). Micah uses similar expressions respecting prayers which are offered too late (Mic. iii. 4).

7. Why Jehovah has withdrawn himself. *dealt treacherously*] i.e. faithlessly. The word is used of an adulteress, Jer. iii. 20.

they have begotten strange children] The subject of the verb are the Israelites individually, of whom the same statement is made which we have already met with respecting the nation in ii. 4, 5.

now shall a month devour them] The time for punishment has arrived. Instead of watching gladly for the new moon to fix the various hallowed festivals (comp. ii. 11), they should have a 'fearful looking for of judgment' increasing as each new moon arose. If not this, then perhaps the next would bring with it a slaughtering, plundering horde of invaders. 'Month' should rather be **new moon** (as nothing is added to qualify the sense).

with their portions] i.e. the lands assigned to the several tribes and families (comp. 'the portion of Jezreel,' 2 Kings ix. 10).

8—15. The prophet 'in the spirit' sees the threatened trouble bursting upon both the separated kingdoms. In vain will Ephraim seek help from Assyria; there is no deliverance from Jehovah's hand until Ephraim repents.

8. *Blow ye the cornet...the trumpet*] A usual direction on the approach of an invading army; see viii. 1; Jer. iv. 5, vi. 1. Previously to the captivity the cornet and the trumpet were probably different names for the same instrument, as the Law (Num. x. 1—10, xxxi. 6) prescribes the use of the silver trumpet (*khaçōçerah*) in cases when, according to the prophetic and historical books, the cornet or *shōfār* was used. In writings of post-Captivity origin (Ps. xcviii. 6; 1 Chr. xv. 28; 2 Chr. xv. 14) they appear to represent different instruments, or rather slightly different varieties of the same instrument. The Mishna tells us that the *shōfār* was sometimes straight, sometimes curved, and this difference would of course involve a difference of note. We may help

Cry aloud *at* Beth-aven,
After thee, O Benjamin.
9 Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke:
Among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be.
10 The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound:

ourselves to form an idea of the Hebrew trumpets by representations of the Egyptian (see Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs*, II. 260, &c.).

Gibeah...Ramah] Both towns were situated on eminences, and therefore well adapted for signals of alarm; both apparently belonged to Judah. Gibeah (lit. 'a hill') is 'Gibeah of Benjamin' (1 Sam. xiii. 2, xiv. 16), or 'Gibeah of Saul' (1 Sam. xi. 4); the Ramah (lit. 'height') is the same where Samuel dwelt (1 Sam. xv. 34). Both probably belonged at this time to Judah (see 1 Kings xv. 21; Isa. x. 29). Taking in Bethel, the cities are those from which the signal of alarm could be heard in both kingdoms.

after thee, O Benjamin] Rather, **behind thee, O Benjamin**; this is the cry of warning which the men of Beth-aven or Bethel (a border-town between Benjamin and Ephraim) are to send on to the Benjamites. Understand either 'the sword rages', or more simply 'be on thy guard.' Sept. however renders (from a different text?), ἐξέστη Βενιαμίν, 'Benjamin is distraught.'

It is worth noticing that Hosea (the prophet of the tribes which proudly claimed the name of Israel) does not mention Jerusalem. To have mentioned the capital of Judah would perhaps have led him to widen his range of thought too much. But under the name 'Benjamin' he has been thought to hint obscurely at Jerusalem, for 'the boundary between Judah and Benjamin ran at the foot of the hill on which the city stands, so that the city itself was actually in Benjamin' (Fergusson, in Smith's *Bible-Dictionary*, I. 983).

9. *rebuke*] Rather, **punishment**, as the same word is rendered Ps. cxlix. 7 A.V. 'punishments upon the people(s).' The root meaning of the word is 'judicial decision.'

among the tribes of Israel] i.e. Israel in its widest sense is the object of Hosea's denunciations. The phrase 'the tribes of Israel', standing by itself, never means the Ten Tribes only.

have I made known...] Or, **do I make known that which is sure** (lit. trustworthy).

10. *were like them that remove the bound*] Rather, **are become like them that remove the landmark**. The landmarks were under the protection of religion (Prov. xxii. 28, xxiii. 10; Deut. xix. 14), and to remove them laid the offender under a curse, according to Deut. xxvii. 17. Hosea cites the offence as the greatest conceivable example of revolutionary caprice. Judah, it would seem, was not more fortunate now in its upper classes than Israel (comp. vi. 10, 11 Sept., and Isaiah's 'these also', viz. the chief men of Jerusalem, Isa. xxviii. 7).

Therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.
Ephraim *is* oppressed *and* broken in judgment, 11
Because he willingly walked after the commandment.
Therefore *will* I *be* unto Ephraim as a moth, 12
And to the house of Judah as rottenness.
When Ephraim saw his sickness, 13
And Judah *saw* his wound,
Then went Ephraim to the Assyrian,
And sent to king Jareb:

like water] Jehovah's wrath is like fire in its destructiveness, and like a swollen stream in its abundant volume.

11. *Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment*] The same two participles are again combined in Deut. xxviii. 33, and, as here, in connexion with invasion, 'thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway' (so Auth. Vers.). The judgment meant is God's. The idea was so familiar that a more distinct form of expression was unnecessary. The Hebrews and the other Semitic peoples regarded war as a kind of pleading before a judge; comp. for the latter, the Syriac *khayeb* 'damnavit, vicit', and for the former Isa. liv. 17, where 'weapon' is parallel to 'tongue that riseth against thee'). Compare Schiller's *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*. Somewhat less probable is the rendering 'crushed as to (his) right', i.e. his right of national independence.

he willingly walked after the commandment] 'The commandment' (or, 'ordinance') is generally explained of the arbitrary calf-worship (rather bull-worship) set up by Jeroboam I., but as the word only occurs once again in the stammering speech of the drunkards (Isa. xxviii. 10), it seems more than probable that we should adopt the reading of Septuagint and Peshito, and render the whole clause, **he would go after vanity** (i.e. after idols, as Jer. xviii. 15; Ps. xxxi. 6). With this reading, too, we can account for the fact that the noun has no article. Archbishop Secker well points out that the two initial letters of the next word in the Hebrew are such as help to account for the scribe's supposed error.

12. *Therefore will I be...*] Rather, **And as for me, I am**, &c. The same two figures are of frequent occurrence; they are combined again in Job xiii. 28. A gradual inward corruption was destroying the two Israelitish states quite as effectually as a foreign conquest. Anarchy and civil war combined with a retrograde religion and a lax morality to bring northern Israel in particular to the verge of ruin. Elsewhere Hosea describes its condition as a living death (xiii. 1).

13. Both states are conscious of the destroying cancer, but neither of them adopts the only possible means of arresting its progress.

his sickness...his wound] The ordinary figure for corruption of the body politic; comp. Isa. i. 5, 6; Jer. xxx. 12, 13.

and sent to king Jareb] Some have thought that as Ephraim and Judah

Yet could he not heal you
Nor cure you of your wound.
14 For I *will be* unto Ephraim as a lion,
And as a young lion to the house of Judah:
I, *even* I, will tear and go away;
I will take away, and none shall rescue *him*.
15 I will go *and* return to my place,
Till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face:

are both mentioned in the first line, the subject of the second verb in this second line must be Judah. As the text stands, however, this is impossible, and if 'Judah' once stood in the text as the subject of 'sent', it is not easy to conjecture how it dropped out. None of the ancient versions contains the word. But who is 'king Jareb', or rather **the fighting king** (a nickname for the king of Assyria), to whom Ephraim sent? Sennacherib has been thought of, as if there were a playful interpretation of a shortened form of this name, but the short for Sennacherib (on the analogy of Baladan for Merodach-Baladan, Sharezer for Nergal-Sharezer) would be *akhirib*, not *irib*. Schrader thinks that the king meant is Asurdan, who in 755 and 754 made expeditions against Khatarik (the Hadrach of Zech. ix. 1) and Arpadda (Arpad); Nowack prefers Tiglath-Pileser II., to whom the epithet 'fighter' would accurately apply. In the uncertainty of the Israelitish chronology of this period, a decision is difficult. The boldest conjecture is that of Prof. Sayce, viz. that 'Jareb' was the name borne by Sargon before he usurped the throne, just as 'Pul' is now known to have been once borne by Tiglath-Pileser.

yet could he not...] Rather, **though he will not be able to heal you, nor shall ye be relieved** (or, with other points, **shall he relieve you**) **of your wound**. Delitzsch fully explains the passage in his note on Prov. xvii. 22. The word rendered 'wound' means both bandage and ulcer, and the verb is used in Syriac for 'to be delivered, or, removed.' How completely the politicians of Israel miscalculated, appears from x. 6.

14. If a stronger figure is necessary to warn Israel of the destructiveness of his present course, Jehovah will compare himself to a lion (comp. Isa. xxxi. 4).

as a lion, and as a young lion] Hebrew has at least five words for 'lion'; of the two selected here, the first describes this terror of ancient Palestine as a roarer (so xiii. 7), the second as covered with a mane.

I, even I] For the axe may be human, but the hand which wields it is divine (Isa. x. 15).

I will take away...] i.e. I will carry off the prey. The passage reminds us of the comparison of the Assyrians to a lion in Isa. v. 29.

15. *return to my place*] See Mic. i. 3, from which it is clear that Jehovah's 'place' is the heavenly temple (Isa. vi. 1). Now that Jehovah has for a time deserted his guilty people, he will return to his seat on high, and watch (Isa. xviii. 4) the doings of men. He has full confidence that Israel on his side will return and repent.

In their affliction they will seek me early.
Come and let us return unto the LORD: 6
For he hath torn, and he will heal us;
He hath smitten, and he will bind us up.
After two days will he revive us: 2
In the third day he will raise us up,

acknowledge their offence] Rather, **feel their guilt** (as the word means in Lev. iv. 4, 5; Zech. xi. 5).

CHAP. VI.

HOW LITTLE HAS ISRAEL EFFECTED, AND HOW LITTLE WILL HE EVER EFFECT, BY HIS FITS OF REPENTANCE, WHICH CONTRAST SO VIOLENTLY WITH HIS FLAGRANT TRANSGRESSIONS OF GOD'S LAW!

1—3. The prophet enters into the feelings of the only too quickly repentant Israelites, and imagines them encouraging each other to return to Jehovah. These three verses are closely connected with the end of the preceding chapter; comp. 'let us return', 'he hath torn' (*v.* 1), and 'his going forth' (*v.* 3), with 'I will go and return' (v. 15), and 'I, even I, will tear' (v. 14). Ver. 2 is parenthetical. Comp. the similar profession of the Israelites in viii. 2.

1. *he will heal us*] At any rate the Israelites have found out the true physician (comp. vii. 1, xi. 3). Assyria 'could not heal them' (v. 13).

2. This verse contains the germ of the striking allegory of the dry bones (Ezek. xxxvii. 1—10), and reminds us also of the prediction of an Israelitish resurrection in Isa. xxvi. 19. The idea is that, contrary to all human expectation Israel shall quickly emerge from the depths of trouble. What human skill could cure a dangerously wounded man in three days? Yet a wonder as great has happened to the sick man Israel. That the passage has primarily a contemporary reference, and contains a figurative description of a national revival, is admitted by Pococke, who however endeavours to combine with this view a very forced interpretation of pre-critical origin. He thinks the Jews 'might say, *after two days*, &c., because by him whom God would so raise up deliverance should be wrought for them when their case was as desperate as of one that had been so long dead'; or, to put his view of the secondary meaning more clearly, the resurrection of the coming Christ was to the Israelites (though they knew it not) the justification of their hope of a national restoration. The view is ultimately traceable to the paraphrase in the Targum, 'he will revive us in the days of consolation which are to come', i.e. at the resurrection (see the Peshito of John xi. 25, which shows that 'consolation' and 'resurrection' are synonymous in Aramaic). Pusey and many old expositors even take the supposed reference to our Lord's resurrection to be primary. But the context certainly does not favour any such reference, whether primary or secondary. Calvin, with his usual fine perception, remarks, 'sensus ille videtur mihi nimium argutus.'

And we shall live in his sight.
3 Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD:
His going forth *is* prepared as the morning;
And he shall come unto us as the rain,
As the latter *and* former rain *unto* the earth.
4 O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee?
O Judah, what shall I do unto thee?
For your goodness *is* as a morning cloud,
And as the early dew *it* goeth away.

live in his sight] Lit., 'before him', i.e., under his protection (comp. Gen. xvii. 18; Isa. liii. 2; Jer. xxx. 20.

3. *Then shall we know*, &c.] But as this construction is resumptive of *v.* 1, we had better translate, **Yea, let us know, let us be zealous to know, Jehovah**, i.e., to know him as our master, protector, and friend. Why so? Because the want of this knowledge was the cause of Israel's misery. It was however a hasty resolution, from which a full and free confession of sin was fatally absent (contrast penitent Israel's words in xiv. 2). Hence the complaint of the omniscient Holy One which follows in ver. 4.

his going forth] viz. from his 'place' in heaven (v. 15.)

is prepared as the morning] Or, 'is certain as the grey of morning' (which heralds the glories of sunrise). The speakers, then, are 'a people that walk in darkness' (Isa. ix. 1).

as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth] Rather, **as the heavy rain, as the latter rain which watereth the earth.** Comp. Ps. lxii. 6. The Israelites count upon the return of God's favour with the same confidence with which, at the autumnal and vernal equinoxes, a farmer counts upon the former and latter rain. Their confidence is excessive; they presume on God's forgiveness without complying with His conditions.

4. The answer of Jehovah, who cannot be satisfied with such a superficial repentance and such hasty resolutions of 'knowing' Him.

what shall I do unto thee?] 'What other means can possibly be employed to move thee to a serious repentance?' Comp. Isa. v. 4.

your goodness] Rather, **your piety.** The word (*khésedh*) is the same as that rendered in *v.* 6 'mercy'; and so St Jerome here ('the mercy which I had been wont to shew'), and Keil (explaining, as in iv. 1, 'your kindness to those in need'). But the context requires another sense—'your love to God', and this is what A.V. means, though it expresses it weakly. The Peshito also renders 'goodness', and again in *v.* 6.

as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away] Rather, ...**and as the night mist which early goeth away** (so again xiii. 3). The 'cloud' spoken of, then, is a cloud such as Isaiah speaks of as coming 'in the heat of harvest' (Isa. xviii. 4); more precisely, it is one of those dense masses of night-vapour, which the westerly

Therefore have I hewed *them* by the prophets; 5
I have slain them by the words of my mouth:
And thy judgments *are as* the light *that* goeth forth.
For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; 6

winds of summer bear from the Mediterranean Sea, and which more than supply the place of dew. After 'making a fair show' in the bright morning light, they are soon sucked up by the hot sun, and pass away (Neil, *Palestine Explored*, p. 138). The cognate word in Arabic means a soft rain (comp. Deut. xxxii. 2). Comp. on xiv. 6.

5. Similar fitful repentances have already forced Jehovah to interpose, like a severe but kind physician who will cut out the diseased part rather than suffer the evil to spread.

hewed them by the prophets] i.e. warned them of the fatal consequences of their conduct. The divine or prophetic word has a destroying power ascribed to it (Isa. xi. 4, xlix. 2; Jer. i. 10, v. 14; 1 Kings xix. 17).

thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth] 'Thy judgments,' i.e. those pronounced upon thee. According to this reading we have to supply 'as,' and suppose a sudden change of pronoun. The Septuagint, however, with the Peshito, and even the Targum, reads differently—**my judgment shall go forth as the light** (this simply involves a slightly different grouping of the letters). 'My judgment', viz. that upon Israel; 'shall go forth', for we are no longer in the imagined future (as in *vv.* 1—3); 'as the light', that all may see it and tremble.

6. A further explanation of these severe judgments, the moral effect of which the prophet has been considering.

For I desired mercy and not sacrifice] Rather, **for I delight in piety and not in sacrifice.** The Hebrew is vague; *khésedh* 'dutiful love' may mean either 'piety' or 'kindness',—love to God or love to man. The parallel clause favours the former, the context at first sight the latter; but we may keep 'piety', for both love to God and the knowledge of God are regarded as leading to the imitation of God's φιλανθρωπία (comp. Jer. xxii. 16 'was not this to know me', and 2 Sam. ix. 3 'that I may show the kindness of God unto him'). As Aben Ezra well remarks, it is stedfast love which the prophet means, not that which is like a cloud (*v.* 4). 'And not sacrifice'='rather than sacrifice'; the prophet thinks comparatively little of sacrifices, but does not denounce them as positively displeasing to God. Comp. Isa. i. 11—20; Mic. vi. 6—8; Jer. vii. 22, 23 (though this is of doubtful interpretation). The sacrifices alluded to are those which the Israelites will at a future time offer in the vain hope of propitiating Jehovah (v. 6). This first half of the verse is twice quoted by our Lord (Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7). A striking parallel occurs in a saying ascribed to Buddha, who, however, unlike our Lord, denounced animal sacrifices as in themselves wrong: 'If a man live a hundred years, and engage the whole of his time and attention in religious offerings to the gods, sacrificing elephants and horses, and other life, all this is not equal to one act of pure love in saving life' (Beal's *Texts from the Buddhist Canon*).

And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.
7 But they like men have transgressed the covenant:
There have they dealt treacherously against me.
8 Gilead *is* a city of them that work iniquity,
And is polluted with blood.
9 And as troops *of robbers* wait for a man,

7. The contrast between Israel's conduct and Jehovah's requirements.

But they like men...] Literally, **But they—they like** (other) **men transgress the covenant** (or, perhaps, the ordinance, see on viii. 1). The word rendered 'men' (*'ādām*) means ordinary or less privileged men, as in Ps. lxxxii. 7 and most probably Job xxxi. 33, 'If I covered like (common) men my transgressions.' It is assumed (as in Job *l.c.*) that ordinary men are addicted to certain vices, and that such privileged persons as Job or the Israelites ought to act up to a higher standard. The mention of the transgressions of '(other) men' reminds us of Isa. xxiv. 5, where the inhabitants of the world are said to have 'transgressed commandments, violated the statute, broken the perpetual covenant', partly perhaps with reference to the 'law written in the heart', and partly to Gen. ix. 1—16. The Targum, the Talmud, and the Vulgate (followed by Delitzsch on Job xxxi. 33) render, 'like Adam', but the Book of Genesis says nothing of a 'covenant' with Adam.

there] Implying a gesture of indignation. The divine speaker points to the northern kingdom as the scene of the unfaithfulness (comp. 'there' in *v.* 10).

8, 9. Two spots of specially ill fame are singled out—Gilead and the road to Shechem.

8. *Gilead*] Here alone, and probably in Judg. x. 17, mentioned as the name of a town. We still find the name of Gilead (in its Arabic form *Jil'âd*) lingering at various parts of the ancient Gilead, but we cannot venture on a combination with the prophet's Gilead. Ramoth-Gilead would seem, from its importance, a not unlikely place to be meant.

polluted with blood] Rather, **tracked with bloody foot-prints**; comp. the striking expression used of Joab in 1 Kings ii. 5. The Gileadites, half-civilized mountaineers, seem to have been distinguished for their ferocity (comp. 2 Kings xv. 25). From the next verse we may perhaps infer that at Gilead too the priests were foremost in lawlessness.

9. *And as troops...*] Rather, **And as bandits lying in wait, (so doth) the company of priests; they murder on the road towards Shechem; yea, they commit outrages.** The reference in the figure is either to the doings of native banditti (comp. vii. 1), or to those of the guerilla-bands of Arameans, Moabites, &c., which were constantly invading Israel and Judah (2 Kings v. 2, xiii. 20), whenever the central power was weak. The word for 'company' (*khébher*) implies an organized guild (such as the Pharisees afterwards), so that there was no public opinion to check the offenders. Shechem had long ago been notorious for the highway robberies committed by its inhabitants, and

So the company of priests murder *in* the way by consent :
For they commit lewdness.
I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel : 10
There *is* the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled.
Also, O Judah, he hath set a harvest for thee, 11
When I returned the captivity of my people.
When I *would have* healed Israel, 7
Then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria :
For they commit falsehood ; and the thief cometh in,
And the troop *of robbers* spoileth without.
And they consider not in their hearts 2
That I remember all their wickedness :

was therefore destroyed by Abimelech (Judg. ix. 25, 45). It lay on the road, which was doubtless much frequented, from Samaria and the north to Bethel, now the chief sanctuary of the so-called Ten Tribes. Gilead and Shechem together represent the eastern and western divisions of the kingdom.

10, 11. Jehovah is still the speaker. From his heavenly 'place' he points indignantly (as *v.* 7) to the abominations practised 'there', i.e. in the whole land of Israel, for even Judah has not escaped the infection. The structure of the verses becomes more symmetrical, if we attach the concluding words of *v.* 10 to *v.* 11, and turn *v.* 11 thus, altering one vowel-point, **Israel is defiled; for thee also, Judah, a harvest is appointed.** The Septuagint partly favours this, rendering *ἐμιάνθη Ἰσραὴλ καὶ Ἰούδα.* The concluding words of *v.* 11 should rather be attached to *v.* 1 of chap. vii.

Chap. VII.

1—7. The moral degradation of Israel, especially of its ruling class, which, so far from stemming the tide of corruption, applauds and encourages its progress.

1. How foolish is the conduct of Israel! When the great turning-point in her fortunes arrives, the day of mingled punishment and mercy, all his wickedness will be remembered and brought to light. To improve the sense and restore balance to the opening of the verse, it is expedient to read thus, with Ewald, **When I turn the fortunes of my people, when I heal Israel, then will be manifest Ephraim's guilt and Samaria's wickedness, how they practise falsehood, and the thief cometh in, and bandits roam abroad without.** Comp. iv. 2. Samaria is mentioned, as the abode of the princes next spoken of.

2. *they consider not in their hearts*] Rather, as margin, **they say not to their heart.** 'Heart' here = self; the meaning is therefore they have no pricks of conscience.

Now their own doings have beset them about;
They are before my face.
3 They make the king glad with their wickedness,
And the princes with their lies.
4 They *are* all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker,
Who ceaseth from raising after *he* hath kneaded the dough,
until it be leavened.
5 *In* the day of our king the princes have made *him* sick
with bottles of wine;
He stretched out his hand with scorners.
6 For they have made ready their heart like an oven, whiles
they lie in wait:

now their own doings have beset them about] They are so entangled in sin (to use a more familiar figure) that they cannot even try to repent.

they are before my face] Comp. Ps. xc. 8.

3—6. The highest personages are not too refined for the most sensual pleasures. A consuming passion inflames them as if with the heat of a furnace. Their way of celebrating a royal commemoration is to indulge in monstrous excess.

4. *as an oven...*] The fire corresponds to sensual lust, the oven is the heart. The baker **ceaseth from kindling** (so we should render), when the oven has reached a certain heat, and then he leaves the fire to smoulder, till the fermentation of the dough is complete, and a fresh heating is necessary. So after passion has once been gratified, it smoulders for a time, but is afterwards kindled to a greater heat than before, when some attractive object comes within its range.

5. Here the figurative description is interrupted by one from real life.

In the day of our king] Either the coronation-day (so the Targum), or (comp. Matt. xiv. 6) the royal birthday is meant. The prophet quotes the words of the princes. He was himself too loyal to the house of David to adopt the phrase seriously.

have made him sick with bottles of wine] Rather, **are become sick with the fever of wine.** The Auth. Version probably means to imply that the princes meant to assassinate the king when he was drunk; but there is no evidence of this (see on *v.* 7).

he stretched out his hand with scorners] i.e. he (the king) entered into close relations with proud, lawless men (comp. Prov. xxi. 24). So Isaiah too calls the politicians of Judah 'men of scorn' (Isa. xxviii. 14). Hosea may perhaps refer to some lawless project decided upon in the intoxication of the revel.

6. *For they have made ready their heart like an oven, whiles they lie in wait*] Better, with Ewald, 'Yea, almost like the oven have they made their heart in their intrigue', if there were only sufficient justification for the rendering. This view of the verse makes it a climax to ver.

Their baker sleepeth all the night;
In the morning it burneth as a flaming fire.
They are all hot as an oven, 7
And have devoured their judges;
All their kings are fallen:
There is none among them that calleth unto me.
Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; 8
Ephraim is a cake not turned.
Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth 9
it not:

5. Better still, by self-evident corrections of the text, **For their inward part is like an oven, their heart burneth in them** (the reason for the strong expression 'scorners').

their baker] Better, to follow the vocalizing of Targum and Peshito, and render, **their anger**, viz. against the destined victims of their intrigue.

sleepeth all the night] Rather, still retaining the consonants of the text, **smoketh all the night** (for the phrase, comp Deut. xxix. 20). The night is mentioned as the time when evil devices are matured.

7. The consequence of all this licence. King after king falls a victim to the violent passions he has fostered in his subjects. Four regicides are recorded within forty years (2 Kings xv.). And yet no one calls to Jehovah for help! Sacrifices indeed were not wanting (vi. 6), but those who offered them had no true 'knowledge of God', and so they profited them not.

8—16. The outward evidences of Israel's decay.

8. *he hath mixed himself among the people*] Rather, **he mixeth himself among the peoples.** How? By courting the favour now of Egypt, now of Assyria (*v.* 11).

a cake not turned] Burnt to a coal at the bottom, raw dough at the top: an apt emblem of a character full of inconsistencies (Bishop Horsley). The explanation is plausible, as long as we look at the figure by itself. But the context, which refers only to Israel's political decline, favours another view. 'A brand snatched from the burning' is a figure of a country, rescued only just in time from destruction. Hosea's 'cake not turned' may equally well be an emblem of a country half ruined by calamities, and not rescued. The calamities of Israel, alas! are of his own making; by mingling with 'the peoples' he sought for warmth, but found a destroying conflagration (cf. Isa. xlvii. 14). The 'cake' is the round flat cake of bread which was baked on hot stones (1 Kings xix. 6) or on hot ashes, and required frequent turning, to prevent its being burned.

9. *Strangers have devoured his strength*] By heavy tribute and desolating invasions. The 'strangers' would be Hazael and Benhadad (2 Kings viii. 12, x. 32, 33, xiii. 3, 7), Pul (2 Kings xv. 19, 20),

Yea, grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.

10 And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face:
And they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this.

11 Ephraim also is like a silly dove, without heart:
They call *to* Egypt, they go *to* Assyria.

12 When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them;
I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven;
I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.

and Tiglath-Pileser (2 Kings xv. 29), though the two last are really the same person, Pul being the private name of a usurper who took the old royal name of Tiglath-Pileser (as proved by Mr Pinches).

gray hairs are here and there upon him] Lit., 'are sprinkled upon him.' That a state has different stages, analogous to the periods of human life, was a familiar idea; comp. xi. 1; Isa. xlvi. 4; Ps. lxxi. 18 (where the speaker is probably the personified people, comp. *v.* 20 in the Hebrew).

10. *And the pride of Israel...*] Repeated from v. 5, just as xii. 9 *a* is repeated in xiii. 4 *a*. It is not the prophet who speaks condemning a bad quality in his people, but Jehovah, Israel's true Pride, and the source of Israel's prosperity, who utters a solemn word of warning translated into act. How much more suitable this explanation is in such a context than either of the alternatives mentioned on v. 5.

for all this] i.e. in spite of all this chastisement, comp. Isa. ix. 12, 17, 21.

11. *Ephraim also is like...*] Rather, **But Ephraim is become like a silly dove without understanding.** This verse does not begin a fresh section, but is closely connected with the preceding. As a dove, fleeing from a hawk, is snared in the fowler's net, so Ephraim, when afraid of Assyria, calls in the assistance of Egypt, and when afraid of Egypt, applies to Assyria (see Introduction). In his folly he does not observe the snare which the false friend, or rather (*v.* 12) Jehovah, prepares for him.

12. *When they shall go*] Rather, **As soon as they go.**

I will spread my net] The image of Jehovah's net is not a frequent one; see however Job xix. 6; Ezek. xii. 13, xvii. 20, xix. 8, xxxii. 3. Here the net means captivity.

I will bring them down] Apparently by placing a bait to draw them to the earth, at least if the figure is to be continued. Am. ix. 2 is therefore not parallel.

as their congregation hath heard] Lit., 'according to the announcement to their congregation.' Comp. Isa. liii. 1, 'Who hath believed our announcement' (a cognate word) = 'that which we heard'. The punishment, says Hosea, will agree exactly with his own repeated predictions (comp. v. 9).

Woe unto them! for they have fled from me: 13
Destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me:
Though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me.
And they have not cried unto me with their heart, 14
When they howled upon their beds:
They assemble themselves for corn and wine,
And they rebel against me.
Though I have bound *and* strengthened their arms, 15
Yet do they imagine mischief against me.
They return, *but* not *to* the most High: 16

13. *they have fled from me*] like birds scared out of their nest (Isa. xvi. 2); but the Israelites have only themselves to blame for the fatal consequence. They have left their true home, and shall find no second (see on ix. 17).

transgressed] Or, 'rebelled'; strictly, 'broken away.'

though I have redeemed...] Rather, **I indeed would redeem them, but they**, &c. The 'lies' of the Israelites related (see next verse) to Jehovah's power and willingness to save.

14. *with their heart, when they howled*] Rather, **in their heart, but they howl.** The prophet contrasts the quiet communion of the heart with Jehovah and the wild-beastlike 'howling' of the impenitent Israelites, who murmur at the withdrawal of material blessings. Comp. Isa. xxiv. 11.

they assemble themselves] i.e. to lament together in their affliction. But the rendering is doubtful. Ewald, better, 'they excite themselves' (or, are inwardly moved). But it is much more natural to suppose that *Daleth* has become altered into *Resh*, and that we should read differently. Render therefore, with the Septuagint and some Hebrew MSS., **they cut themselves.** It is an allusion to a well-known sign of mourning, forbidden indeed by the Law (Deut. xiv. 1; Lev. xix. 28, xxi. 5), but habitually practised in Palestine (Jer. xvi. 6, xli. 5, xlvii. 5, xlviii. 37), and still noticeable in the time of St Jerome (comm. on Jer. xvi. 6).

15. *Though I have bound and strengthened their arms*] Rather, **I indeed have trained and strengthened their arms.** The Israelites had had a proof of this not long since when 'Jehovah saw the affliction of Israel that it was very bitter', and 'saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash' (2 Kings xiv. 27).

16. *They return, but not to the most High*] Rather, **They turn** (i.e. shift or change), **but not upwards** (as xi. 7). They are not content with passive complaints; they have reached a turning-point in their history, but their way only leads them further and further from the 'knowledge of God.'

They are like a deceitful bow:
Their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue:
This *shall be* their derision in the land of Egypt.
8 *Set* the trumpet to thy mouth.
He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD,

like a deceitful bow] i.e. like a bow which shoots an arrow in a wrong direction, 'not upwards', towards Israel's 'strong rock', but earthwards. Cf. the same figure in Ps. lxxviii. 57.

for the rage of their tongue] 'Rage'; or **insolence** (i.e. towards God). The root-meaning (as gathered from Arabic) is to make a grumbling sound, like an irritated camel. Hence the appropriateness of the mention of the tongue. The verb is sometimes rendered 'to curse.'

their derision in the land of Egypt] Probably an embassy had boasted of Israel's strength, to entice the Egyptians into an alliance. We may probably assume that the 'sword' by which the princes were to fall is that of the Assyrians.

CHAP. VIII.

1—7. IN GREAT EMOTION (WHICH REFLECTS ITSELF IN THE SHORT CLAUSES) THE PROPHET ANNOUNCES THE IMMINENT INVASION OF N. ISRAEL, AND ITS TRUE CAUSES—IDOLATRY AND SCHISM.

1. *Set the trumpet to thy mouth*] Lit., **To thy palate the cornet!** An abrupt appeal by a heavenly voice to the prophet, who is bidden to give warning of the approach of the foe (comp. v. 8 note). 'Palate', or 'mouth', as the organ of speech, as Prov. v. 3, viii. 7, &c.

as an eagle] The Hebr. word (*nesher*) seems to have been specially applied to the great griffon vulture, the carrion-eating habits of which are referred to in Job xxxix. 30; Prov. xxx. 17; Matt. xxiv. 28, and its swift flight in Deut. xxviii. 49; 2 Sam. i. 23; Jer. xlix. 22. References to this bird of prey (Assyr. *nasru*) are frequent in the cuneiform inscriptions, and figures of it occur in battle-scenes on the monument. The more appropriate is it as an emblem of the Assyrian invaders. Similarly Nebuchadnezzar (whom St Jerome wrongly supposes to be meant here) is called an eagle (or vulture) in Jer. xlix. 22; Ezek. xvii. 3.

the house of the LORD] In chap. ii. we had the people of Israel represented as a bride who is sustained and adorned by her husband; here we have the figure completed by the description of the land of Canaan as the divine Bridegroom's house (as ix. 15, comp. *v.* 3). So Assyrian *bît Khumri* means the land of N. Israel, though here Khumri (Omri) is not a divine name. In the New Testament the house of God, or of Christ, is the Church, see Heb. iii. 6; 1 Tim. iii. 15.

Because they have transgressed my covenant,
And trespassed against my law.
Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee. 2
Israel hath cast off *the thing that is* good: 3
The enemy shall pursue him.
They have set up kings, but not by me: 4
They have made princes, and I knew *it* not:
Of their silver and their gold have they made them idols,

my covenant] Most explain this of the 'covenant' or contract between Jehovah and Israel. But the phrase is more probably equivalent to 'mine ordinance', for the parallel clause has 'my law.' The Heb. word (*b'rīth*) sometimes appears to mean simply 'appointment', 'ordinance' (so 2 Kings xi. 4; Jer. xi. 6, xxxiv. 13, 18; Job xxxi. 1; Ps. cv. 10), which may even be the primary meaning (comp. Assyr. *barû* 'to decide'). Comp. the phrase 'the book of the covenant' (Ex. xxiv. 7).

my law] See note on *v.* 12.

2. *Israel shall cry...*] Rather, **Unto me they will** (then) **cry, My God, we—Israel—know thee.** When the punishment comes, they will cry aloud to Jehovah, and lay stress upon their belonging to Him. 'Israel' is mentioned, as the title of honour (the *kunya*, comp. the commentators on Isa. xliv. 5), given by Jehovah, which was the outward sign of His mystic connexion with His worshippers. The speech of the Israelites is the counterpart of that of Jehovah in Isa. xliii. 1, 'I have called thee by name; thou art mine.' (The Septuagint and the Peshito, however, omit 'Israel.') 'My God' seems used distributively, each Israelite professes to feel his individual relation to the national God.

3. The appeal is dismissed; Israel's piety is but superficial (comp. vi. 1—4); his 'knowledge of God' is not that which Jehovah expects.

hath cast off] Not merely put aside out of caprice, but (as the word implies) **cast off with loathing** (see *v.* 5).

4. Israel's great offence—making a schism in the 'theocratic' community. Setting up idols was virtually rebellion against Jehovah; whatever Ahijah said (1 Kings xi. 31, &c.), or a lower class of prophets after him (comp. Am. vii. 12, 13), the great prophets, such as Hosea, could not sanction any of the N. Israelitish dynasties (see on i. 11). See next note.

not by me] Rather, **not from me.** There is a verbal contradiction between these words and those ascribed to Shemaiah in 2 Kings xii. 24. A prophet could only declare the will of God with regard to the particular case laid before him. The disunion of north and south was so great, that for the sake of peace it was better to separate. But when the moral and spiritual decay of N. Israel had reached such a point as in the time of Hosea, no prophet with any spiritual insight could fail to perceive that the usurping kings lacked the divine blessing.

That they may be cut off.
5 Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast *thee* off;
Mine anger is kindled against them:
How long *will it be* ere they attain to innocency?
6 For from Israel *was* it also:
The workman made it; therefore it *is* not God:
But the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces.
7 For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind:
It hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal:
If so be it yield, *the* strangers shall swallow it up.

that they may be cut off] The verb is in the singular, and the implied subject is the silver and gold which had been made into idols.

5. *Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off*] This rendering is very harsh in this context; Ewald prefers 'He hath cast off thy calf', a contrast to 'Israel hath cast off that which is good' in *v.* 3. But 'casting off' implies a previous connexion (e. g. Ps. xliii. 2); it is better to revert to the intransitive sense which belongs to the cognate verb in Arabic, and render, **Thy calf, O Samaria, is loathsome.** 'Thy calf' is a contemptuous expression for the small golden bull which was symbolic of Jehovah; such a bull, it appears, existed at Samaria, and doubtless at other places besides Dan and Bethel (e. g. at Gilgal).

ere they can attain innocency] Lit. 'will they be incapable of innocency.' Idolatry presented itself to Hosea, not only as a form of worship, but as an immoral way of living.

6. *For from Israel was it also*] Rather, **was this also**; i. e. this idol too (as well as the usurping kings) was Israel's work, unsanctioned by me. But the construction is very dubious, and the integrity of the text may well be questioned.

the workman made it; therefore it is not God] Lit., 'and it is not God.' It has a merely fictitious existence (so xiii. 2). The sarcastic words of Hosea contain the germ of the vehement polemic of the later prophets against idolatry in general.

but...in pieces] Rather, **yea, Samaria's calf shall be (broken to) shivers** (Targum, 'chips of boards').

7. The consequences of Israel's evil conduct and policy are here represented under the figure of sowing and reaping. But the form of the figure is varied. First, Israel sows wind and reaps whirlwind, i. e. his present conduct is unprofitable to himself, and the requital of it shall be actual destruction. Next, though Israel sows a corn-plant, it never grows up to its full size (it, i. e. Israel, **hath no standing corn**); or if it does, it either yields the farmer no meal, or its meal is seized upon by the enemy, i. e. the worldly results of Israel's policy are never good, and any wealth that it attains passes into the hands of the enemy.

the bud shall yield no meal] In the Hebrew there is a characteristic play upon sounds,—the *çemakh* yields no *qemakh*.

Israel is swallowed up: 8
Now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein
is no pleasure.
For they are gone up *to* Assyria, a wild ass alone by him- 9
self:
Ephraim hath hired lovers.
Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will 10
I gather them,
And they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king
of princes.

8—14. The judgment is already begun; Israel has drawn it upon himself, by dallying with Assyria, by religious abuses, and by a vain confidence in fortified cities.

8. *is swallowed up*] i. e. is as good as swallowed up. Foreigners have already begun to absorb the precious morsel (cf. vii. 8, 9); complete destruction is only a question of time.

now shall they be...] Rather, **now are they become among the nations**, &c. Comp. Jer. xxii. 28, xlviii. 38. 'The coarse pottery of this country', says Dr Thomson, 'is so cheap that even poor people throw it aside in contempt, or dash it to pieces on the slightest occasion' (*The Land and the Book*, p. 36). 'Nations' (as *v.* 10).

9. *gone up*] Used, like ἀναβαίνω, of going inland ('up the country').

a wild ass alone by himself] Rather, **a wild ass taking his own way by himself.** The point of comparison is obstinacy. The wild ass is a gregarious animal, but individuals in the herd will sometimes go and roam moodily and obstinately by themselves. See Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, pp. 41—43, and Davidson's full note on Job xxxv. 5—8. Ishmael is compared to the wild ass in Gen. xvi. 12, and now it appears that Israel is no better than Ishmael. In spite of warnings, he will have his way, though intercourse with Assyria is his ruin.

Ephraim hath hired lovers] Rather, **loves.** The allusion is to the gifts by which Israel sought to gain the Assyrian or Egyptian alliance (xii. 2). The Sept. evidently had a different, though probably not a more correct text.

10. This verse is obscure, and open to a variety of interpretations; the following however seems by far the most probable.

Yea, though they have hired among the nations] Rather, **Yea, though they hire**, &c., i.e. though they attain a certain amount of success in their negotiations, and win the protection of some stronger nation, yet the time has come for me to check their misplaced activity.

now will I gather them] Surely not, 'now will I gather the Assyrian army to fight against them', which does not suit the context (mark 'yea, *though*'), but, 'now will I restrain their roving propensities.' Where or how, we are not yet told; it is captivity which is dimly hinted at. This interpretation is strongly confirmed by the next clause.

and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes] 'The king of princes' is a phrase not found elsewhere, but might con-

11 Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin,
Altars shall be unto him to sin.
12 I have written to him the great things of my law,

ceivably='the king of kings', which is a title claimed by Tiglath-Pileser I. (*Records of the Past*, v. 8, comp. Ezek. xxvi. 7). The 'burden' might be the heavy tribute paid by Menahem (2 Kings xv. 20). But why 'sorrow *a little*'? No better sense is made by rendering 'and they shall begin to be diminished [in numbers, or in prosperity] by reason of the burden of the king of princes'; why 'begin'? A third rendering, 'and they shall soon be in anguish through the burden' &c., involves a violation of Hebrew usage ('soon' should be 'a little'). The only remedy is to follow the Septuagint, which reads two of the Hebrew words differently, and render **that they may cease for a little from anointing a king and princes** (all the versions and some Hebr. MSS. sanction 'and'). Comp. xiii. 10 'Give me a king and princes', from which it seems as if the *personnel* of the class of 'princes' would vary according as the king were of one dynasty or another. In Judah, at any rate, as well as in Egypt, we know that the royal princes enjoyed many of the more important offices under the crown (comp. Isa. vii. 13; Jer. xvii. 20; 1 Kings xxii. 26; 2 Kings xxv. 25).

11. *Because*] Rather, **For.** It is a justification of the foregoing threat.

hath made many altars to sin] In times of national trouble, sacrifices were multiplied, to propitiate the national God (comp. Isa. i. 11). But as no corresponding effort was made to purify the conduct and the character, such sacrifices did but increase the load of the national guilt. Instead of 'many sacrifices', Hosea says 'many altars', because there was even less attempt in the times of Hosea and Isaiah to centralize worship in the northern kingdom than in the southern. The strict rule of Deuteronomy (one temple and one altar) seems at present far removed from the general consciousness. See Introduction, part v.

altars shall be unto him to sin] Rather, **(yea,) altars are to him for sinning (thereby).** There is no unfairness on Jehovah's part; Israel cannot pretend ignorance of His will.

12. *I have written to him*] Auth. Vers. here follows the Targum and the Peshito (the Septuagint and the Vulgate give the future), but it is more idiomatic (see p. 36, note) to render in the present **—I am wont to write.** The prophet is fully conscious that the divinely given laws under which Israel lives (or ought to live) were not formulated once for all in the Mosaic age, but grew up in different ages. Thus understood, the passage is an important authority for the existence of a legal literature before the Pentateuch became canonical. But another rendering is widely accepted, **'Though I** wrote unto him' (my law by myriads, i.e. in myriad precepts).

the great things of my law] The expression in the Hebrew, however we understand it, is remarkable and somewhat harsh. All difficulty would be removed if we might suppose the omission of a letter and a transpo-

But they were counted as a strange *thing*.
They sacrifice flesh *for* the sacrifices of mine offerings, 13
and eat *it;*
But the LORD accepteth them not;
Now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins:
They shall return *to* Egypt.

sition; the phrase would then run, 'the words of my law.' The Hebrew Bible however gives 1, in the margin, 'the multitudes of my law' (Vulg. *multiplices leges meas*), which is adopted by Auth. Ver., and 2, in the text, 'the myriads (or, the myriad precepts) of my law.' The word rendered 'multitudes' is questionable, since it occurs elsewhere only in the singular, and there is here no apparent occasion for a plural. 'The myriads of my law' is a bold expression, but this reading is generally preferred. 'My law' may be understood to imply that, though Jehovah's will was made known 'by divers portions' (Heb. i. 1 R. V.), yet these 'portions' when fitly joined together made a whole. This was certainly the feeling of those Jewish Bible-students who affixed the vowel-points; but, as Hosea is thinking of the multiplicity of the laws, rather than of their unity, some have thought that we should rather read (altering one point), 'my laws.' We can estimate the multiplicity spoken of from the Pentateuch, whether this work was known to Hosea in anything at all like its present form or not. We must remember, however, that the laws to which the prophet alludes are concerned, *not with rites and ceremonies*, but with civil justice and the applications of a plain but religiously sanctioned morality (comp. the so-called Book of the Covenant, Ex. xxi.—xxiii).

they were (rather, are) *counted as a strange thing*] As something which did (does) not concern them.

13. *They sacrifice*, &c.] Rather, **My sacrificial gifts they sacrifice; (yea,) flesh, and they eat it**; i.e., their sacrifices are a mere form, Jehovah abhors them; the only positive result is that the sacrificer has the luxury of a dinner of flesh-meat. (Comp. a similar accusation against the priests, iv. 8.) That sensual appetites were partly concerned in the offering of sacrifices even in times of national trouble may perhaps be inferred from Isa. xxii. 13, the eating of animal food being only allowed, especially we may suppose in Jerusalem, in connexion with a sacrificial act; comp. Lev. xvii. 3—6; Deut. xii. 15, 16 (a mitigation of a primitive rule). [The word rendered 'gifts' is uncertain.]

now] The climax of Israel's iniquity has been reached; Jehovah will now prove in act that He has not forgotten their transgressions.

they shall return to Egypt] Some think this is a kind of poetical expression for being carried into captivity—a most unnatural supposition. In Isa. vii. 18 we find a threat of a double invasion from Egypt and from Assyria, and why can we not imagine that a people who were ever vacillating between Egyptian and Assyrian alliances should be threatened with an Egyptian as well as an Assyrian captivity? Comp. the prophecies of restoration from Egypt in Isa. xi. 11; Mic. vii. 12.

14 For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth
temples;
And Judah hath multiplied fenced cities:
But I will send a fire upon his cities,
And it shall devour the palaces thereof.
9 Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as *other* people:
For thou hast gone a whoring from thy God,

The word 'return' is pointed with the terrible associations of the 'house of bondage'; comp. Deut. xxviii. 68. Hosea repeats the threat in ix. 3, 6, xi. 5.

14. A fresh reason for the 'swallowing up' of which the prophet has spoken (*v.* 8)—Israel's worldliness and self-dependence.

buildeth temples] It seems doubtful however whether Hosea would have laid such stress on the wickedness of many temples and many altars (see *v.* 11). More probably 'temples' should be **palaces** (the primitive meaning of the Assyrian cognate is 'great house'), in which case for 'palaces' at the close of the verse we had better substitute **castles**. It is not so much the 'palaces' and the 'castles' themselves as the worldliness and the tyranny of those who lived in them that Hosea denounces.

but I will send a fire...] Referring to both Israel and Judah. Remarkably enough, we find these words repeated seven times in Amos as a refrain to as many denunciations (Am. i. 4—ii. 5). It seems hardly likely that so original a prophet should have quoted these words; perhaps they were a well-known prophetic commonplace.

Chap. IX.

Here the discourse takes a new start. The prophet is a witness of the wild rejoicings of harvest, and warns his people not to be so exuberant, for they must go forth into captivity. Three times in this and the two next chapters he recurs to the early history of the Israelites, and shows how they have constantly met the divine mercy with rebellion and idolatry, so that Jehovah has no choice but to thrust them away.

1—9. A vivid picture of the bitterness of the calamity in prospect. It does but equal the Gibeah-like wickedness of Israel.

1. *for joy*] Rather, **too loudly** (lit. 'unto exultation').

as other people] Rather, **as the peoples.** The exuberant joy of the wild nature-worships of Palestine was abhorrent to the calm and deep moral religion of the prophets. To the heathen nations certain material blessings were the final object of the forms of worship; to the prophets and their disciples, the outward gifts of the Deity stood in a close relation to states of the character, as being the rewards of moral obedience (comp. Deut. xxviii. 1—14).

for thou hast gone...] The blessings of the ingathering were falsely ascribed by Israel to the Baalim (see on ii. 13). As long as they were enjoyed, Israel felt as much pledged by them to her false gods as the harlot is bound by her 'hire' to her paramour. At every recurring season of harvest Israel gratefully connected these blessings with her

Thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor.
The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, 2
And the new wine shall fail in her.
They shall not dwell in the LORD's land; 3
But Ephraim shall return *to* Egypt,
And they shall eat unclean *things* in Assyria.
They shall not offer wine *offerings* to the LORD, 4

supposed protectors, and offered first-fruits to them, or, as Hosea puts it, she **loved a harlot's hire** (comp. on ii. 12) **upon all corn-floors**, alluding to the various local festivals (comp. on xii. 9). Observe, Hosea finds fault with the Israelites, not for neglect of a centralizing ordinance, such as Deut. xvi. 15, but for honouring the Baalim in preference to the true spiritual God. Contrast the reference to the autumn festival in a post-exile prophecy (Zech. xiv. 16—19).

2. *the winepress*] Rather, **the vat** (within the press) into which the grape-juice or the oil flowed; comp. Joel ii. 24.

shall fail in her] Rather, **shall fail her** (lit. 'shall lie unto her', as Hab. iii. 17). There is a good various reading (supported by the versions and by the Babylonian codex) 'in them', but the same interchange of pronouns occurs in iv. 19. Idolatrous Israel is personified as a harlot. Wine-drinking was, in fact, so closely connected with the customs of idolatry (comp. Judg. ix. 27; Am. ii. 8), that the Nazirites bound themselves by a vow of 'total abstinence' (Num. vi. 3).

3. *in the LORD's land*] 'For I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel', Num. xxxv. 34. The expression originated in the popular belief that as, for example, Chemosh was the God of the Amorites, so Jehovah was the God of the Israelites (Judg. xi. 24), a belief which could lead even Jonah to imagine that he could 'flee unto Tarshish from the presence of Jehovah' (Jon. i. 3).

shall return to Egypt, &c.] A repetition of the threat so well calculated to deter the Israelites from disobedience (see on viii. 13).

shall eat unclean things in Assyria] Comp. Ezek. iv. 13, 'Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their bread defiled among the nations whither I will drive them.' The prospect held out is not that the captive Israelites would be reduced to the necessity of eating prohibited food, but that, since all heathen lands were 'unclean' (Am. vii. 17), all the products of the soil would also be unclean. The 'uncleanness' in both cases was caused by the absence of sanctuaries dedicated to Jehovah. See the foll. notes.

4. *They shall not offer wine offerings to the LORD*] Libations of wine were accompaniments of the burnt-offerings and the peace-offerings, and so are naturally mentioned in connexion with the 'sacrifices.' It is implied that wine in general would become 'unclean', if a certain measure of it were not devoted to this sacred and sanctifying purpose. The clause is therefore equivalent to this—'The wine that they drink shall not be pleasing to the LORD'; comp. the following words.

Neither shall they be pleasing unto him:
Their sacrifices *shall be* unto them as the bread of mourners;

neither shall they be pleasing (lit. sweet) *unto him*] Strangely enough, the accentuation of the text separates between the verb and its subject; the Sept., Targ., and Peshito preserve the obviously right view of the construction, **neither shall their sacrifices be pleasing unto him.** The peculiar accentuation was possibly caused by a wish to preclude a misinterpretation of Hosea's language, viz. that the Israelites would go on sacrificing to Jehovah even when in captivity. But the truth is that the Hebrew *zébakh* (like ἱερεῖον, see Mahaffy's *Old Greek Life*, p. 32) has a twofold meaning: 1, a sacrifice, and 2, a feast of animal food. Flesh-meat was not the habitual food of the Israelites, any more than it is of the Arabs at the present day; to partake of it was a special divinely given privilege (comp. Gen. ix. 3), and those who from time to time availed themselves of this privilege had to make an acknowledgment of it by presenting, at the very least, the blood before Jehovah (comp. 1 Sam. xiv. 32—35). The Book of Leviticus (xvii. 3, 4) prescribes that the blood of all slain beasts should be offered to Jehovah at the door of the tabernacle, and though a milder rule is given in Deuteronomy (xii. 15, 16), yet, from what we know of the religious habits of the people, we may safely assume that not only did they worship Jehovah at the 'high places', but they also in one way or another presented any animal food of which they partook at the local shrines, as well as at the central sanctuary. Hence we may very probably lay down that in old Hebrew as in old Greek life the conceptions of sacrifice (and presenting the blood was a minor kind of sacrificial act) and of feasting upon animal food were inseparable; indeed, we find in the semi-secular Book of Proverbs two synonymous proverbs, in one of which a feast is described as 'a stalled ox', and in the other as 'sacrifices' (comp. Prov. xv. 17 and xvii. 1). Consequently, we might, in the clause before us, with equal justice render 'neither shall their sacrifices', and 'neither shall their feasts (i.e. meat-meals) be pleasing unto him.' It must be admitted, however, that the sense is improved if, with Kuenen, we alter a *Beth* into a *Caph*, and render, **neither shall they lay out their sacrifices before him** (upon the altar); comp. iii. 4. Such a mistake in the reading of the text would escape notice the more easily, because the phrase produced by it is so idiomatic (comp. Jer. vi. 20 *b*). If we accept this emendation, all that has been said on the connexion of sacrificing and feasting will still retain its explanatory value. We may illustrate this connexion further by Ezek. xxxix. 17, where Ezekiel is bidden to invite 'every feathered fowl' to the 'sacrifice' (so A.V.) that Jehovah doth 'sacrifice for them'; 'sacrifice' (*zébakh*) is here evidently equivalent to 'feast' (in the sense described above).

their sacrifices...mourners] Rather, **(their bread) shall be unto them as the bread of mourning**; the first two words seem to have fallen out of the text. 'Bread of mourning' means such as was eaten during the seven days of mourning, when everything in the vicinity of the dead

All that eat thereof shall be polluted:
For their bread for their soul shall not come *into* the house of the LORD.
What will ye do in the solemn day, 5
And in the day of the feast of the LORD?
For lo, they are gone because of destruction: 6
Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them:
The pleasant *places* for their silver, nettles shall possess them:

body was regarded as unclean (Num. xix. 14); it is therefore the emblem of utter impurity. Or there may possibly be a more special reference to the funeral feasts, which lingered on among the Israelites, as St Jerome has noticed (see his note on Jer. xvi. 7 and see Deut. xxvi. 14), but which are to be distinguished from the offerings made at intervals (in Sirach's time) at the grave (Ecclus. vii. 33, xxx. 18). See Ewald, *Antiquities*, E. T., p. 153, Renouf, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 132, Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii. 27.

for their bread for their soul...] Rather, **for their bread shall be (only) for their hunger** (i.e. to satisfy their appetite); **it shall not come into the house of the Lord.** They will not have the joy which belongs to those who have duly presented the tithes of their corn, or the firstlings of their flock, or offered their burnt sacrifices—the joy of the sense of the divine favour. They cannot have this, because their food lacks the consecration of 'the house of the LORD' (not the temple at Jerusalem, but any of the 'high places' dedicated to Jehovah).

5. *What will ye do*, &c.] The festivals, which were kept up in N. Israel, even after the schism, were seasons of popular merry-making (see ii. 11). But now as each 'feast of Jehovah' comes round in the calendar, ye will neither have the mechanical performance of ritual forms, nor the accompanying holiday-mirth, to fill up the vacant hours.

6. Hosea 'in the Spirit' sees the Israelites already being carried into captivity.

because of destruction] Rather, **from the devastation.** They have left their desolated country.

shall gather them up] viz. in burial; comp. Ezek. xxix. 5; Jer. viii. 2, xxv. 33.

Memphis] The most ancient of the capitals of Egypt, on the west bank of the Nile, south of old Cairo, elsewhere called in the Hebrew Noph (Isa. xix. 13; Jer. ii. 16), but here Moph. The Egyptian name, given to it by Menes, accounts for both forms—Men-nufre 'the good' or 'perfect mansion'; the Assyrians called it Mimpi. All that is left of Memphis is its necropolis 'stretching north and south nearly twenty miles', where Hosea threateningly declares that the Israelites shall find a grave, remote, dishonoured, and 'unclean.' Contrast Ex. xiv. 11, where the Israelites reproach Moses with having deprived them of their right to sepulture in the vast cemeteries of Egypt.

the pleasant places for their silver] Rather, **their precious things of silver**, i.e. costly silver ornaments.

Thorns *shall be* in their tabernacles.
7 The days of visitation are come,
The days of recompence are come;
Israel shall know *it:*
The prophet *is* a fool, the spiritual man *is* mad,
For the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.
8 The watchman of Ephraim *was* with my God:

their tabernacles] i.e., either the idol-tents of the high places (comp. Ezek. xvi. 16), or simply their dwellings (comp. 2 Sam. xx. 1).

7. *are come*] Rather, **come.** The sense is that the days of punishment shall surely come (the tense is the prophetic perfect).

shall know it] i.e. by experience; as Isa. ix. 9. Another view of these words (in connexion with the following clause) is, 'Israel shall perceive (but too late) how it has been deceived by its prophets.' But a false prophet would never be called a 'man of the spirit', but rather 'one that followeth his own spirit' (Ezek. xiii. 3); and neither 'a fool' nor 'mad' suggests the idea of falsehood or hypocrisy.

the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad] These words evidently convey a reproach, for though 'mad' might be taken in a good sense (=frenzied with sorrow, as Deut. xxviii. 34), 'a fool' could hardly be. But if so, introductory words must have dropped out of the text, such as 'who say in their pride.' 'The spiritual man' is, literally, 'the man of the Spirit', i.e. 'the inspired man', Sept. *ἄνθρωπος ὁ πνευματοφόρος.* 'Mad', or 'a madman', 'a fanatic', is a term applied disparagingly to a prophet's disciple in 2 Kings ix. 11, and to Jeremiah by an opponent in Jer. xxix. 26. The expression was doubtless received from those early times, in which the acts performed by prophets were often strange and startling.

for the multitude...] Rather, **for the greatness of thine iniquity, and because the enmity hath been great.** These words are to be connected with the preceding. Israel spoke thus because its iniquity was great, and great also the enmity which certain classes (probably) felt towards the higher prophets. The priests and the lower class of prophets would be at one in their hostility to Hosea. More is said of this feud in the next verse.

8. *The watchman of Ephraim was with my God*] Rather, **is with my God.** There is a various reading 'his God' (so also Rashi), but 'my God' can be well defended; for the watchman spoken of is Hosea himself. We have 'my God' again in *v.* 17. The figure implied is developed more fully in Jer. vi. 17, 'Also I set watchmen over you, (saying,) Hearken to the sound of the trumpet.' 'With my God'='in communion with' or 'helped by.' The connexion will, however, be improved if we suppose that, owing to the fact that 'Ephraim' ends with a *Mem*, the same letter has dropped out at the beginning of the next word. In this case, render (connecting this and the next clause), **Ephraim's watchman, appointed by my God** [comp. in the Hebrew, Isa. viii. 11], **even the prophet—a fowler's snare is,** &c. An entirely

But the prophet *is* a snare of a fowler in all his ways,
And hatred in the house of his God.
They have deeply corrupted *themselves*, as *in* the days of 9
Gibeah:
Therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit
their sins.
I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; 10
I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her
first time:

wrong view of the construction is suggested by the vowel-points (which of course form no part of the text proper), viz. 'Ephraim looketh out (for help) beside my God'; but 'beside' cannot mean 'apart from'; or 'Ephraim is a lier in wait (in his fight) against my God.'

but the prophet is, &c.] See last note. The prophet meant is a true not a false prophet (as Keil takes it), for though the false prophets might be likened to a fowler's snare, their conduct could not be spoken of as 'envious' or 'persecuting' towards Ephraim. It is rather the Ephraimites who are always laying snares (comp. Isa. xxix. 21) for their troublesome 'watchman.'

hatred] Rather, **enmity** (or, hostility; or, persecution).

in the house of his God] This must to some extent be equivalent to the parallel words 'in all his ways.' In *v.* 15 'mine house' means the land of Canaan, and so probably here. Jehovah is not their God, for they (Israel) 'know' Him not; and they cannot abide those who, like Hosea (*v.* 8) and the psalmist (Ps. lxxiii. 23), are 'continually with Him.'

9. *as in the days of Gibeah*] The atrocity described in Judg. xix. 22—30, and referred to by Hosea again in x. 9. All the Benjamites were destroyed except 600 men (Judg. xx. 46—48)—a warning for Ephraim!

10—17. But not only in the days of Gibeah; from the very first, the nation trespassed against Jehovah. Awful shall be the judgment for the continued infidelity—so awful, that Hosea can hardly bear to contemplate it. He seems uncertain whether extermination or dispersion will be the penalty, but concludes with an announcement of the latter.

10. *like grapes in the wilderness*] With such delight as a traveller would unexpectedly find grapes in the desert, did Jehovah regard the children of Israel at the beginning of their national existence. Comp. Jer. ii. 2, 'I remember for thy good the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness.' Jehovah condescends to overlook the frailties and inconsistencies of ancient Israel, and even idealizes its character. Comp. ii. 15, xiii. 1.

as the firstripe in the fig tree] So the better portion of the people of Judah are compared to 'very good figs, even as the figs that are first ripe' (Jer. xxiv. 2). The white fig of Palestine ripens much before the black, sometimes as early as April; the ordinary fig-harvest is not till the middle of August, but early ripe fruit might be found in June. Hence the fitness of Hosea's image (comp. Isa. xxviii. 4; Mic. vii. 1).

at her first time] i.e., when it begins to be ripe.

But they went *to* Baal-peor, and separated themselves unto *that* shame ;
And *their* abominations were according as they loved.
11 *As for* Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird,
From the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception.
12 Though they bring up their children,

they went to Baal-peor, &c.] So early did they fall away; comp. xi. 1, 2. Baal-peor is here (as the form of the construction shows) put for Beth-peor (Deut. iii. 29, &c.), the place where Baal-peor was worshipped. The open falling-away to this heathen deity was one of the most startling episodes of the period of the wanderings (see Num. xxv.). It is commonly held, but is really a pure conjecture, that the worship of Baal-peor was licentious. If this be correct, it will give a special significance to the last clause in the verse, which may however merely mean that the idols, being abominable to the true God, make their worshippers abominable, just as Shame may refer, not to the shameful rites of this Baal, but to God's abhorrence of idolatry. In 1 Kings xi. 5 and elsewhere 'an abomination' is a synonym for an idol, apart from the character of the worship.

separated [i.e. consecrated] *themselves unto that shame*] Rather, **unto Shame** (Heb. *bosheth*). See above, and compare the substitution of *bosheth* or *besheth* for *baal* in proper names, e.g. Jerubbesheth (for Jerubbaal), Ishbosheth (for Eshbaal), Mephibosheth for Meribbaal (comp. Prof. Kirkpatrick on 2 Sam. ii. 8).

and their abominations, &c.] Rather, **and became abominations like that which they loved** (comp. on xii. 11).

11. The prophet leaves us to supply the idea that Ephraim's present transgressions are as heinous as those of old, and passes on to the punishment.

their glory...like a bird] Rather, **like birds.** All their earthly prosperity shall take to itself wings, because, as we have already heard, 'they have exchanged their (true) glory for infamy' (iv. 7). Kimchi narrows the meaning too much, when he says, 'He calls children "glory", for they are the glory of fathers (Prov. xvii. 6).' But of course populousness formed a part of the Israelite's conception of national prosperity.

from the birth, &c.] Rather, **that there shall be no birth, nor being with child, nor conception.** Such is the retribution for their sins against chastity (see on iv. 10).

12. But what shall be the fate of the children already born? A lurid light is next thrown upon this.

Though] Rather, **Yea, though.**

bereave them] Or, 'make them childless'; comp. 1 Sam. xv. 33.

when I depart from them] Better, (reading with a *Shin* instead of a *Sin*), **when I look away from them.** The sense of the passage is,

Yet will I bereave them, *that there shall* not *be* a man
left:
Yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!
Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, *is* planted in a pleasant place: 13
But Ephraim *shall* bring forth his children to the
murderer.
Give them, O LORD: what wilt thou give? 14
Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.
All their wickedness *is* in Gilgal, for there I hated them: 15

even to turn away my face would sink them in an abyss of ruin. The ordinary reading does not allow us easily to account for the 'also', or rather, 'even', which precedes.

13. *Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus,* &c.] The passage is most obscure, and it is difficult to believe that Hosea meant what A.V. supposes. 'As I look at Tyre', would be better; but then it becomes difficult to extract a sense. Tyre is, in fact, very much out of place in a description of the fortunes of Ephraim; and it is a relief to find that it has been introduced by critics contrary to Hebrew usage, for Tyre is elsewhere spelt without a *Vāv*. How, too, can Ephraim be said to be planted, without any explanatory figurative words? The Sept. seems to have had a different text, 'As for Ephraim, according as I see, they have set their sons for a prey'; and this seems preferable to the received text. The prophet sees in imagination the Ephraimites taken like wild beasts, and put to death by their cruel captors.

but Ephraim shall, &c.] Taking the passage as a contrast between Ephraim's past glory and the dreadful fate impending over it. But if Hosea is throughout describing the judgment, render rather, **and Ephraim shall** (or better, must), &c.

14. The prophet recognizes the necessity of a judgment, but pleads for a mitigation. Love for his people burns within him, and prompts him to do all that is consistent with his moral perceptions and the revelation made to him. Comp. the conduct of Moses in a similar case, Ex. xxxii. 11—14.

what wilt thou give them?] The prophet considers what he had best ask for. He is a patriot, but he is also a prophet; he loves his nation with a feminine tenderness, but in zeal for his God he is not inferior to Amos or Isaiah. Hence his momentary perplexity. And yet this is perhaps too literal an interpretation. Rather is it, to use Ewald's language, 'a paroxysm of despair.' Better were it that the Israelites should be condemned to barrenness than lose their choicest young population thus! It is an involuntary cry from the heart.

15, 16. Continuation of the speech of Jehovah, which had been interrupted at *v.* 13.

15. *All their wickedness is in Gilgal,* &c.] The dangerous attractiveness of Gilgal has been mentioned already (iv. 15): the corruption of the northern kingdom had its focus there. At Gilgal, then, Jehovah has learned to 'hate' His unnatural children (comp. xi. 1) so much

For the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house,
I will love them no more:
All their princes *are* revolters.
16 Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit:
Yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay *even* the beloved *fruit* of their womb.
17 My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him:
And they shall be wanderers among the nations.
10 Israel *is* an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself:

that He must drive them out of His House (i.e. the Holy Land, as viii. 1).

all their princes are revolters] Those who should be the leaders in cheerful subordination to the revealed will of God, are the foremost in transgression. The same paronomasia as in Isa. i. 23—as if he had said, they are not *sārīm* but *sōrerīm*.

16. *Ephraim is smitten...*] Ephraim's population is compared to the branches of a tree, and the national vitality to the root. The tree is 'smitten' by the withering heat, or by lightning, or, like Jonah's 'ricinus', by 'worms' (Jon. iv. 7), so that root and branches dry up; the idea of *v.* 11 *b* in figurative form. Comp. Am. ii. 9; Mal. iv. 1.

yea (even) *though they bring forth*] The prophet steps out of the language of metaphor, and repeats in effect ix. 12 *a*. This defines the meaning of 'bear no fruit'.

17. The prophet has quelled his brief paroxysm, and calmly proceeds. But the threat is not now extermination.

My God] No longer, alas! Israel's God. Comp. Isaiah's 'this people' for 'my people' (Isa. vi. 9).

wanderers] Or, **fugitives** (it is the participle of the verb used in vii. 13, see note).

Chap. X.

Israel's guilt and its punishment, each shown by examples. But even in this dark chapter there is a short gleam of hope (ver. 12).

1. *Israel is an empty vine...*] Rather, **Israel was a luxuriant vine, which freely put forth fruit.** A development of the suggestions in ix. 10, 16; compare with it the fuller description in Ps. lxxx. 8—11. The 'fruit' spoken of is not moral, but material. The bounties of

According to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased
the altars;
According to the goodness of his land they have made
goodly images.
Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: 2
He shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.
For now they shall say, We have no king, 3

Providence were lavished upon northern Israel (comp. chap ii.), and gave ground for the expectation of Israel's grateful obedience. The allusion will be to the prosperous reign of the second Jeroboam.

according to the multitude, &c.] Rather, **as his fruit increased, he increased his altars; the better it was with his land, the better he made his** (sacred) **pillars.** The material wealth of the country only served to strengthen and extend the idolatrous system of worship (comp. ii. 8, viii. 4, and note on viii. 11). 'Altars' and (sacred) 'pillars' are naturally mentioned together, the 'pillar' (*maççēbah*) or consecrated stone being the recognized token of a 'high place.' Not only did Jacob set up such pillars at Bethel and elsewhere (Gen. xxviii. 18, xxxi. 45, xxxv. 14, 20), but Moses himself is recorded to have built an altar with no less than twelve sacred pillars (Ex. xxiv. 4). They were forbidden no doubt, absolutely and entirely, in Deut. xvi. 21, but, besides the pillars of Baal (2 Kings iii. 2, x. 26, xvii. 9), there is reason to think that those great stones spoken of in the narrative books (Josh. xxiv. 26; 1 Sam. vi. 14, vii. 12; 2 Sam. xx. 8; 1 Kings i. 9) were really sacred pillars, though the narrator, to avoid startling his readers, denies them the name. Isaiah himself, too, speaks of a 'pillar', or sacred stone, as a sign, together with an altar, of the worship of Jehovah in Egypt (Isa. xix. 19). If then pillars, sacred to Jehovah, were tolerated in Judah in Isaiah's time, much more must we suppose that they were tolerated in Israel. But why does Hosea refer to them as signs of infidelity? Because the worship of Jehovah at the high places was purely formal, and produced no moral effect upon the character (see on viii. 11). In short, he is more consistent, more outspoken than Isaiah himself, who never says that the high places are occasions of sin. True, Hosea speaks of the north; Isaiah of the south.

2. *Their heart is divided*] viz., between Jehovah and idols. But this, which involves an alteration of the points, gives too weak a sense for such a context. It is better to keep the ordinary pointing, and render, **Their heart is slippery** (or deceitful; lit. 'is smooth'; comp. Ezek. xii. 24 smooth, i.e. flattering, divination).

be found faulty] Rather, **be dealt with as guilty** (as xiii. 16).

he shall break down, &c.] The phrase is a bold one; it is literally 'he shall break the necks of the altars', i.e. perhaps strike off their horns (Am. iii. 14), and so destroy them. 'He' is emphatically expressed in the Hebrew, to indicate the unseen observer of their thoughts and actions.

3. *For now they shall say...*] Rather, **Yea then**, &c. They shall

Because we feared not the LORD;
What then should a king do to us?
4 They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant:
Thus judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.
5 The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Beth-aven:

come to perceive that the kings set up on their own authority (viii. 4) cannot help nor deliver them.

We have no king, &c.] i.e., none worthy of the name, for a king should be judge, counseller, general; hence, they continue, **and the king** [whom we have], **what can he do for us?**

4. *They have spoken words*] i.e. mere 'words of the lips' (Isa. xxxvi. 5, comp. Isa. lviii. 13), and, as the context shows, deliberate falsehoods (comp. Isa. xxix. 21).

swearing falsely in making a covenant] Better, **they swear falsely, they make covenants.** The 'covenants' spoken of are those entered into with Assyria and Egypt (*v.* 6, xii. 2), not those of everyday life, since it is the making of covenants, and not the breaking of them, which the prophet denounces.

thus judgment springeth up as hemlock, &c.] Rather, **so judgment shall spring up as the poppy.** Their sins are as it were the seed from which a plant is produced as bitter and as abundant as the poppy of the fields. The plant in question (Heb. *rōsh*) is often referred to, and cannot be identified with precision (see on Jer. viii. 14); most think it is some umbelliferous plant, *rōsh* being the common word for 'head.' Elsewhere its bitterness is the point of comparison (Deut. xxix. 18; Jer. ix. 15; Lam. iii. 19); here its abundant growth as well. Hence some have been led to render, continuing the description of the immorality of Israel, 'and justice springs up like the poppy', i.e., understanding the passage ironically, acts of hurtful injustice are as luxuriantly abundant as that noxious weed, comp. Am. vi. 12. But the universality of the divine judgment can be as well expressed by this figure as the universality of sin, and *v.* 5 requires some previous reference to the punishment to explain it. The judgment began with the man who was foremost in those illegitimate covenants—with the prophet's royal namesake (Hoshea); see 2 Kings xvii. 4.

5. *shall fear because of the calves of Beth-aven*] The statement is keenly ironical. So far from being able to help their worshippers, the 'calves of Beth-aven' shall occasion the greatest anxiety to their worshippers. Probably however we should make a slight emendation, and render, **shall bemoan the calves** (*yānūdū* for *yāgūrū*); comp. the parallel clause. 'Beth-aven' is a contemptuous name for Bethel (see on iv. 15); the 'calves', or more literally 'she-calves', may indicate what we should not otherwise have known, that Jeroboam's 'calf' (or small bull) was only the chief of several of these idolatrous symbols. It

For the people thereof shall mourn over it,
And the priests thereof *that* rejoiced on it,
For the glory thereof, because it is departed from it.
It shall be also carried unto Assyria *for* a present to king 6
Jareb:
Ephraim shall receive shame,
And Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.
As for Samaria, her king is cut off 7
As the foam upon the water.

should be added however that the Sept. and the Pesh. have the masc. sing. form, so that the text is not beyond dispute, especially as Hosea immediately afterwards employs pronominal suffixes of the 3rd pers. sing. masc. The feminine form in the received reading is perhaps to be explained as expressing contempt (Ἀχαιΐδες οὐκ ἔτ' Ἀχαιοί, *Il.* II. 235, has been compared); it is used nowhere else of the steer-gods.

for the people thereof, &c.] Rather, **yea, his people shall mourn for it, and his priests shall tremble for it, for their glory, because it is gone into exile from them.** Again keenly ironical. 'His people' means the steer-god's people; Jehovah's people they are no more: 'Call his name Not-my-people' (i. 9). The 'priests' of the idol, too, are not dignified by the title *kōhănīm*: the word used (*k'mārīm*, as in 2 Kings xxiii. 5; Zeph. i. 4) comes, directly or indirectly, from the Assyrian *kamâru* 'to throw down'; it describes the priests as those who prostrate themselves in worship (Fred. Delitzsch, *Assyrian and Hebrew*, pp. 41, 42). Comp. below, on xi. 8. 'Their glory', i.e. the steer-god; comp. Ps. cvi. 20. Literally, however, it is 'his glory', which might of course mean the splendid appurtenances of the worship of the steer. 'Shall tremble'; *yāgīlū* borrows the sense of *yākhīlu*; it seems preferred for the sake of the assonance with *gālāh* ('it is gone into exile'). Or there may be a scribe's error in the case.

6. *It shall be also*] Rather, **This also** (viz. the steer) **shall be.**

for a present to king Jareb] Just as the kings of Judah repeatedly gave up the gold and silver in the temple to foreign foes. 'King Jareb' should rather be **the fighting king** (i.e. the king of Assyria, see on v. 13).

shall be ashamed of his own counsel] i.e., shall find out what a mistake it was to set up a helpless idol as the protector of the nation. Better, **shall be ashamed through** &c.

7. *her king*] i.e. not merely the king who happened to be on the throne, but the monarchy itself (as *v.* 15). Others, less probably, her idol-god (comp. Am. v. 26).

as the foam, &c.] A striking figure, and singled out for its beauty by so good a judge as Mr Ruskin, but Hosea's is still more appropriate. Render, **as a chip on the face of the water** (following the Septuagint instead of the Targum), and note the contrast between the helpless fragment of wood and the irresistible power of the current.

8 The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed :
The thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars ;
And they shall say to the mountains, Cover us ;
And to the hills, Fall on us.
9 O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah : there they stood :
The battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them.
10 *It is* in my desire that I should chastise them ;
And *the* people shall be gathered against them,
When *they* shall bind themselves in their two furrows.

8. *The high places also of Aven*] Perhaps the same as Beth-aven, i. e. Bethel (iv. 15, x. 5). But 'the high places of idolatry' (as Aben Ezra) is an equally admissible rendering of the phrase; *all* the local sanctuaries of the steer-god will then be referred to. The term 'high place' includes both the mound and the shrine and altar erected upon it.

they shall say...] Applied proverbially by our Lord (Luke xxiii. 30) and by St John (Rev. vi. 16, ix. 6).

9—15. A fresh demonstration of Israel's guiltiness. The prevalent depravity is comparable only to that of the men of Gibeah (see on ix. 9). 'The times are out of joint'; all Israel's doings are against nature, and the retribution must be equally exceptional.

9. *thou hast sinned...*] The prophet's language is correct from his own point of view. True, Israel as a people took summary vengeance on the Benjamites for the outrage of Gibeah. But the seed of wickedness remained, and developed into evil practices worthy only of the Gibeah of old.

there they stood...did not overtake them] The passage is open to various interpretations, but the easiest is as follows,—**there they stood that the war against the sons of unrighteousness might not overtake them at Gibeah.** It is a historic retrospect, with an implied application to the present. Just as the Benjamites offered a stubborn resistance to the onset of the rest of Israel at Gibeah, so the Israelites now persist in their old iniquities, and defy Jehovah to put them down.

10. Jehovah's rejoinder to this tacit challenge. *It is in my desire...*] Rather, **When I desire, I will chastise them, and peoples** (i. e. hostile armies), &c.

when they shall bind themselves, &c.] Rather, **when I chastise them** (or, when I bind them, or, when they shall be bound) **for their two iniquities**, viz. for their revolt from 'Jehovah their God and David their king' (iii. 5). The rendering 'furrows' adopted in A.V. from the Targum has no support in Hebrew usage, and yields no intelligible sense. 'Iniquities' is the rendering of the Septuagint and the Vulgate,

And Ephraim *is as* a heifer *that is* taught, *and* loveth to 11
tread out *the corn;*
But I passed over upon her fair neck:
I will make Ephraim to ride;
Judah shall plow,
And Jacob shall break his clods.
Sow to yourselves in righteousness, 12
Reap in mercy;

as well as of Hitzig, Keil, &c., though these scholars prefer the version 'bind to', and explain that punishment is viewed as the necessary concomitant of transgression.

11. *And Ephraim*, &c.] Rather, **Ephraim indeed is a heifer broken in and loving to thresh, and I have spared the beauty of her neck; (but now) will I make Ephraim to draw.** Israel's punishment is enhanced by contrast with her former prosperity, which, as a mark of the Divine goodness, is compared to the consideration with which a young heifer is treated by its master. The work of treading out the corn was pleasant and easy; the heifer could eat freely as it walked without a muzzle round and round the threshing-floor (Deut. xxv. 4). But this heifer, that is, Israel, has abused the kindness of its Lord (comp. Deut. xxxii. 15), and henceforth shall be put to the heavy labour of the field—a figure for the depressing conditions of life under a foreign master. The rendering 'spared' (literally, 'passed by') is justified by Mic. vii. 18; Prov. xix. 11; it adds a beautiful distinctness to the figure, for the heavy yokes used in the East not only gall the necks of the animals, but often produce deep wounds. The meaning is that Jehovah has hitherto preserved his people from the yoke of captivity; compare the different applications of the same figure in xi. 4. 'Make to draw'; lit. 'make to ride', but *rākab*, as the usage of the cognate word in Arabic shows, can have various secondary meanings. [Space forbids a record of all the explanations of this passage; none is so simple as that of Buhl given above. The objection that to 'pass by' is elsewhere used with reference to transgression is not conclusive; the idiom is just as applicable in the present case. There is good authority, however, for the rendering or paraphrase, 'I mounted upon her fair neck', though why the 'beauty' of the neck should be mentioned, is not clear.]

Judah shall plow] Judah, then, is also a 'stubborn heifer', and cannot be exempted from her sister's punishment.

12. If only a moral miracle could take place, Israel's calamities might yet be averted. Nor is it entirely inconceivable, for miracles, so Hosea thinks, can be wrought by an earnest resolution. Hence Hosea's final appeal.

Sow to yourselves, &c.] Rather, **Sow to yourselves according to righteousness, and ye shall reap in proportion to love**; that is, Let your conduct be governed by a regard to righteousness, and it shall be recompensed in accordance with the divine love (or perhaps, see on

Break up your fallow ground:
For *it is* time to seek the LORD,
Till he come and rain righteousness upon you.
13 Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity;
Ye have eaten the fruit of lies:
Because thou didst trust in thy way,
In the multitude of thy mighty *men*.
14 Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people,

iv. 1, in accordance with the love ye have shown to one another, 'righteousness' being only another aspect of 'love' or benevolence).

Break up your fallow ground] Husbandmen in the East are indolent, and sometimes 'sow among thorns' (Jer. iv. 3). The Israelites are warned against committing this fault in their spiritual husbandry. Evil habits must be broken off, and a new character formed, or it will be impossible to sow the seed of righteousness.

for it is time, &c.] There is still time to seek Jehovah, till he listen to your prayer, and rain his righteous gift of salvation upon you. For the figure of righteousness coming down from the sky, comp. Isa. xlv. 8; Ps. lxxxv. 11. 'Righteousness' bears the meaning 'salvation' which it virtually has so often in the second part of Isaiah, 'righteousness' being the divine principle of action, 'salvation' the same divine principle in action.

13. How necessary is this exhortation! For hitherto the Israelites have done the exact opposite.

plowed wickedness] i.e., formed wicked plans (as Job iv. 8). The word for 'to plough' has in fact another meaning 'to plot.'

reaped iniquity] Better, **reaped injustice**—i. e. the injustice of oppressors, which, being retributive, is, from the higher point of view, substantial justice. The tense is the prophetic perfect.

the fruit of lies] To 'lie' is sometimes = to disappoint (as ix. 2), and probably this is the meaning here, viz. that the consequence of Israel's present policy shall be the disappointment of all his expectations. 'Fruit' implies that that policy has been one of 'lying', i.e. treason both to earthly kings and to Jehovah (comp. xi. 12, xii. 1; Isa. xxviii. 15).

in thy way] i.e. in thy policy. But there is a reading of earlier date than the Massoretic, viz. **in thy chariots** (comp. xiv. 3; Isa. ii. 7) which, as it harmonizes better with the rest of the clause, is undoubtedly preferable. For few scholars will maintain that the ἐν ἁμαρτήμασι of the Vatican MS. of the Septuagint is more original than the ἐν ἅρμασι of the Alexandrine and other MSS. (confirmed by St Jerome and the Syro-Hexaplar text). The Vatican reading can easily be explained; the scribe wished to harmonize the translation with the reading 'in thy way' found by him in his Hebrew Bible.

14, 15. In a few words the prophet describes the crash of Israel's ruin (comp. xiii. 16).

Therefore] The prophet simply connects the judgment by an 'and';

And all thy fortresses shall be spoiled,
As Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel in the day of battle:
The mother was dashed in pieces upon *her* children.
So shall Beth-el do unto you because of your great wickedness; 15
In a morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off.

but the next verse clearly shows that sequence is here identical with consequence.

a tumult] i. e., the tumult, or, more exactly, the 'roar', of an advancing army (as in Isa. xvii. 12).

among thy people] Rather, **against thy peoples.** The tribes of Israel are called peoples, as in Deut. xxxiii. 3.

as Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel, &c.] It would seem that the prophet refers to some event of recent times which took place in the immediate neighbourhood of Ephraim. Beth-arbel will then be, not the Assyrian Arbela, but either the place so called on the west of the lake of Tiberias, or more probably that near Pella, on the east of the Jordan. Who Shalman was, is altogether uncertain. Schrader thinks that he was either Shalmaneser III., who made an expedition to the 'cedar country' (Lebanon) in 775 B.C., and to Damascus in 773—2, on which occasions he may have penetrated into the Transjordanic country, and destroyed the last-mentioned Arbela, or else a Moabitish king Salamanu, mentioned by Tiglath-Pileser as his tributary, who, like other Moabitish kings, very possibly made incursions into the land of Israel. It is against the former view that the abbreviation Shalman nowhere else occurs, and that 'king' or 'king of Assyria' is not added. But the latter view, though plausible (the Hebrew word is strictly, not Shalman, but Shalĕman), is not the only possible one. The Septuagint renders 'prince Salaman,' which, if we may take it as a variant, will point rather to a general (='prince of the host'). The name has been found both on a Palmyrene inscription and in an Arabian song (see *Hamása*, p. 702). The barbarities attending the capture of Beth-arbel seem to have made a deep impression on the Israelites; Mr Huxtable aptly reminds us of the horrors of the sack of Magdeburg. Comp. 2 Kings viii. 12; Ps. cxxxvii. 8, 9. [The Septuagint, the Syro-Hexaplar, the Old Latin, and the Vulgate, followed by Bishop Horsley and the Jewish scholar Abraham Geiger, suppose a reference to Zalmunna (Σαλμανά, Salmana) who was slain by Gideon or Jerubbaal according to Judg. viii. This hint will enable the reader to understand the singular renderings of these ancient versions.]

15. *So shall Beth-el*, &c.] Such is the awful judgment of which the idolatry of Bethel is the cause.

your great wickedness] Lit., 'your wickedness of wickedness', with which some compare the phrases 'song of songs', 'holy of holies.' But it is more natural to suppose that the word 'wickedness' was written twice over by accident.

in a morning] Rather, **in the dawn.** The meaning is that when

11 When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him,
And called my son out of Egypt.
2 *As* they called them, so they went from them:
They sacrificed unto Baalim, and burnt incense to graven images.

the morning-grey appears, the king will be found to be cut off. All has happened as quickly as time seems to have passed when we awake (comp. Ps. xc. 6, 'they become as a sleep').

Chapter XI.

For the third time the prophet reverts to the early history of Israel, and points out how Jehovah has proved his parental love, and how ill is the return which Israel has made for this love. Verses 1—7 contain this melancholy historic retrospect and a fresh announcement of the penalty which a righteous father cannot withhold. Then the tone suddenly changes to one of promise (see below). The last verse of chap. xi. would be attached more fitly to chap. xii., of which it forms the first verse in the Hebrew Bible.

1. *When Israel was a child*] i. e., in the earliest stage of Israel's national existence, which is here dated, not, as in ii. 3, from the wanderings in the wilderness, but from the sojourn in Egypt. For the figure, see on 'gray hairs', vii. 9.

called my son out of Egypt] 'Called' him, locally, into the land of Canaan, and morally, to set an example of true religion. Comp. Ex. iv. 22, 'Israel is my son, my firstborn; and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me.' The words are quoted in St Matthew (ii. 15), who renders from the Hebrew, in connexion with the sojourn of the child Jesus in Egypt. Like the portraiture of the Servant of Jehovah in the second part of Isaiah, the description of Israel as Jehovah's Son was held to be at least in part applicable to the one perfect Israelite. The national ideal never realized in the nation was realized in the Christ. The divine purpose so often baffled in the one was completed in the other.

2. *As they called them*, &c.] Or, **The more they called them**, &c. (comp. iv. 7). Since Israel disobeyed the first call by Moses, prophets were sent to repeat the call, but their preaching only seemed to increase Israel's obstinacy (comp. Isa. vi. 9, 10; Jer. vii. 25, 26). What, then, was the good of prophecy? It kept up a church within the nation, and it developed ideas which bore fruit in due time.

unto Baalim, &c.] Rather, **to the Baalim** (see on ii. 13)...**to the graven images.**

3. *I taught Ephraim also to go*] Rather, **Whereas I taught Ephraim to go.** A figure for the special providence watching over Ephraim. Not Judah, but Ephraim, is spoken of, for the kingdom of Israel embraced the fairer part of the territory, and was far stronger than that of Judah.

I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms ; 3
But they knew not that I healed them.
I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love : 4
And I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws,
And I laid meat unto them.
He shall not return into the land of Egypt, 5
But the Assyrian shall be his king,
Because they refused to return.

taking them by their arms] Rather, if we accept the Massoretic reading, 'he took them up in his arms.' There are however grave philological objections to this rendering, and we should probably, with most of the versions, correct the reading, and translate, **I took them up in my arms.** There is a beautiful climax in this part of the figure ; not only did Jehovah train Israel to walk, but when he was tired, Jehovah carried him in his arms, comp. Isa. lxiii. 9; Deut. i. 31, (xxxii. 11), and comp. a parallel passage in the Rig-Veda (x. 69, 10, Max Müller), 'Thou barest him as a father bears his son in his lap.'

they knew not] i.e. they recognized not (as i. 3).

that I healed them] The same figure as in v. 13, vi. 1, vii. 1. Comp. Ex. xv. 26, 'for I am Jehovah thy healer.'

4. *I drew them with cords of a man*, &c.] A new image suggested by x. 11, and descriptive of the fatherly love of God. Not with the violence suited to an unruly heifer, but with the 'cords of men' (i.e. such as men can bear), did Jehovah win his people's obedience. But the expression is strange.

that take off the yoke on their jaws] Rather, **that lift up the yoke over their cheeks.** Jehovah compares himself to a considerate master, who raises the yoke from the neck and cheeks of the animal, that it may eat its food more conveniently.

and I laid meat unto them] This version however is impossible. As the text stands, we can only render, either (altering one vowel-point), **and I bent towards him and gave him food,** or, **and (dealing) gently with him I gave him food.** Not of course to be interpreted literally ; the figure beautifully describes the tender indulgence of Jehovah to his people.

5. *He shall not return into the land of Egypt*] This however is pointless ; why should Egypt be mentioned except as the land of bondage? It is also inconsistent with the statements in viii. 13, ix. 3, 6, xi. 11. Some think that *lo* (here rendered 'not', but also, when spelt differently, meaning 'to him') belongs properly to the end of the previous verse, though no tenable way of fitting it into the construction there has yet been proposed. Others would render in verse 5, 'Shall he not return'? but this does not read naturally. At any rate, the sense required is, 'He shall return into the land of Egypt.' See note on viii. 13.

to return] viz. to Jehovah.

6 And the sword shall abide on his cities,
And shall consume his branches, and devour *them*,
Because of their own counsels.
7 And my people are bent to backsliding from me:
Though they called them to the most High,
None at all would exalt *him*.
8 How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?
How shall I deliver thee, Israel?
How shall I make thee as Admah?
How shall I set thee as Zeboim?
Mine heart is turned within me,
My repentings are kindled together.

6. *And the sword*, &c.] Rather, **And the sword shall whirl about in his cities, and shall make an end of his defences** (lit. his bars; comp. Jer. li. 30). The sword is personified as the symbol of war, as Ezek. xiv. 17.

7. *And my people*, &c.] This verse gives the ground of the judgment; 'and'='for', 'in fact.' The reference to 'backsliding' (lit. turning, or turning about) should be taken in connexion with xiv. 4.

though they called, &c.] Rather, **and if they are called** (lit., if they, viz. the prophets, call him) **upwards, not one striveth to rise.** There is a complete moral apathy. A phraseological point of contact with vii. 16.

8—11. The prophet cannot believe in a final rejection of Israel (comp. xiii. 14). He speaks as if Jehovah had at first contemplated this. Evidently there was a conflict in his own mind between the ideas of justice and love. Justice seemed to demand that all relations between Jehovah and Israel should be broken off; love remonstrated with the assurance of its undecayed healing faculty (xiv. 4). Both justice and love were divine; hence it seemed that there must be a conflict even in the mind of Jehovah. Let us not however presume to deduce a 'doctrine' from Hosea's description of his mental mood. His final intuition alone is his legacy to the Church; not the inward struggle out of which he triumphantly emerged.

8. *deliver thee*] Not in the sense of ὑπερασπιῶ of the Sept., but in that of Symmachus' ἐκδώσω. Better, **surrender thee.**

Admah...Zeboim] Hosea, like the author of Deut. xxix. 23, derives his knowledge of the overthrow of the 'cities of the plain' from a tradition independent of that in Gen. xix. For another instance of such independent knowledge, see xii. 3—5.

my repentings are kindled together] Even this inaccurate rendering cannot quite conceal the fine intuition of the prophet. By partly humanizing God's nature, he as it were divinizes man's. Human sympathy is but a rill from the mighty stream of God's tender mercy. A closer rendering would be, **I am wholly overcome with sympathy.**

I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, 9
I will not return to destroy Ephraim:
For I *am* God, and not man;
The Holy One in the midst of thee:
And I will not enter into the city.
They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: 10

The Hebrew idiom however is different—'my sympathies are wholly overcome.' Almost the same phrase occurs in Gen. xliii. 20, 'his compassions were overcome towards his brother.' [The word rendered 'are overcome' (*nik'meru*) has the closest affinity with the Assyrian *kamâru* 'to throw down', referred to in the note on x. 5 in explanation of *k'mârîm* '(idolatrous) priests.'] In Jer. xv. 6 a different but equally anthropomorphic expression is ascribed to Jehovah—'I am weary of sympathizing.'

9. *I will not return*, &c.] The strict rendering of the words is, 'I will not again destroy Ephraim'; the sense however, is, **I will not bring back Ephraim to nothing.** He who moulded Ephraim into a nation will not busy himself with it again to its destruction. Comp. the same Hebrew idiom in ii. 9.

for I am God, and not man] The perfection of the Divine nature does not, to Hosea, exclude the possession of something analogous to human feelings, but one thing it does forbid us to assume, viz. that an emotion of anger should divert Jehovah from the execution of his eternal purpose.

the Holy One in the midst of thee] It is the glory of Israel to have the Holy One specially in her midst. Whatever interferes with His supreme right of property in Israel, He must destroy, but He will not so chastise His chosen people as to extinguish it altogether. All that is left will be holy, as Jehovah is holy—devoted to Jehovah, as Jehovah is devoted to Israel. Of course, though Jehovah's holiness has a special relation to Israel, this does not exclude a more general relation to the world outside. His manifestation is concentrated, but not confined, within His 'peculiar people.'

I will not enter into the city] But this is pointless, for why should a visit from Jehovah be deprecated (comp. Ex. xx. 24)? Hence many, adopting a different view of one word, render, **I will not come in fury.** This is, however, not free from objection, and a very slight emendation gives the very appropriate sense, **I will not come to exterminate** (parallel to 'to destroy').

10, 11. Instead of introducing his description of Israel's restoration by some phrase like, 'When I heal Israel' (vii. 1), the prophet abruptly transports us *in medias res*. The return of the Israelites of the dispersion is singled out as one of the most characteristic features of the Messianic age (comp. Isa. xi. 11, 12, xxvii. 13; Jer. iii. 18; Zech. x. 10). The lion's roar takes the place of the 'great trumpet' in Isa. xxvii. 13.

10. *They shall walk*, &c.] Rather, **They shall go after Jehovah,**

When he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west.

11 They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt,
And as a dove out of the land of Assyria:
And I will place them in their houses, saith the LORD.

12 Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit:
But Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.

as after a lion that roareth; for he himself shall roar, and sons shall come hurrying from the west (lit. from the sea). 'The west' means the same as 'the islands (or, coast-lands) of the sea' in the latter part of Isaiah, except that Hosea's knowledge of the coasts and islands of the western sea would be much vaguer than that of his fellow-prophet, if Isa. xl.—lxvi. is as late a work as many moderns suppose. 'Go after' is a phrase for the dependent relation of a worshipper to his God; comp. i. 2; Jer. vii. 9; 1 Sam. vii. 2; Deut. i. 36. For 'shall roar', comp. Joel iii. 16; Am. i. 2, iii. 8; Jer. xxv. 30. Jehovah is compared to a lion calling the young lions; contrast the figure of the lion in v. 14, xiii. 7.

11. *tremble as a bird...as a dove*] 'Tremble' is the literal rendering, but the context shows that a thrill of eagerness doubling the speed of motion is what is meant (comp. Ovid's 'pennâ trepidante'). Render therefore, **come hurriedly**, and continue, **as sparrows...as doves.** Doves were very early known in both Egypt and Assyria. Elsewhere (vii. 11) Hosea compares the Israelites to doves for their folly. [For the rendering 'come hurriedly' comp. the Syriac *r'hab* which combines the meanings of haste and trembling.]

place them] Rather, **cause them to dwell.**

12. The Septuagint, and after it the English Version, mistook the blame of the second half of this verse for praise, and hence attached the verse to chap. xi. Properly, however, it belongs to chap. xii., of which it is the first verse in the Hebrew Bible. Jehovah is the speaker. Israel's sins of treason and deceit are so numerous that his God is as it were surrounded by them, and can see nothing else; nor has Judah shown any more deference to the repeated warnings of the prophet.

but Judah yet ruleth, &c.] Rather, **and Judah is yet wayward towards God, and towards the faithful Holy One.** 'Yet', because Hosea's earlier prophecies record the long continuance of Judah's backsliding (v. 10, vi. 4, 11, viii. 14). The word rendered 'wayward' has the root-meaning of roving unrestrained, as when an animal has broken loose. Hence Jer. ii. 31, 'Wherefore say my people, We rove at large; we will come no more unto thee.' 'The Holy One' has in the Hebrew the plural termination, as in Prov. ix. 10; it seems formed on the model of Elohim, '(the) divinity', lit. '(the) divinities.' We might express the force of the plural by rendering 'the All-Holy One', or (as margin) 'the Most Holy.' The Septuagint (partly followed by

Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east 12
wind:
He daily increaseth lies and desolation;
And they do make a covenant with the Assyrians,
And oil is carried into Egypt.
The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, 2
And *will* punish Jacob according to his ways;
According to his doings will he recompense him.
He took his brother by the heel in the womb, 3

the Peshito) renders, *νῦν ἔγνω αὐτοὺς ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἅγιος κεκλήσεται Θεοῦ*. Cornill however has brought fresh light by correcting thus,..... 'and hath yoked itself (Num. xxv. 3, 5) with sodomites' (1 Kings xiv. 24).

CHAPTER XII.

Again poetry is dispelled by prose, and the infidelity of both kingdoms forces itself on the prophet's mind. Such prose is all the more wearisome to an idealist, because the history of the patriarch Jacob seems to lift up a standard which ought to be dear to his descendants. O that Israel would yet return to his allegiance! Such is the purport of xi. 12—xii. 6.

1. *wind...the east wind*] Note the climax; the parching east wind combines the ideas of destructiveness and emptiness. Comp. Job xv. 2, xxvii. 21. For 'feedeth on', read **joineth himself unto**.

lies and desolation] Rather, **lies and violence**. But the Septuagint reads, 'lies and falsehoods'—more plausibly, as the other combination is unparalleled.

a covenant with the Assyrians, &c.] Comp. v. 13, vii. 11. Oil was one of the most precious natural products (Deut. viii. 8; Ezek. xvi. 19, xxvii. 17), and is mentioned as a present sent to 'the king' in Isa. lvii. 9. Comp. on vii. 11.

2. *Jacob*] Here used for Judah (as Ps. lxxvii. 16).

3—6. Two episodes (for a third, see *v.* 12) in the history of Jacob are applied to the spiritual wants of his descendants. Jacob in the very womb seemed ambitious of the blessing, and when a grown man, he wrestled with the angel for a still higher blessing than before. But, as we are led to interpret the prophet's thought, the Israelites, instead of justifying their name, and 'waiting upon their God', have denied Jehovah, and sought for weak human help.—The parallel passages in Genesis are xxv. 26 *a*, xxxii. 28 *b* (both ascribed to 'the Jehovist'), though we cannot perhaps assert dogmatically that they were known to Hosea, for in *v.* 4 he introduces a detail not mentioned in Genesis. Hosea *may* have drawn from oral tradition.

3. *He took his brother by the heel*] As if Jacob meant, The Supplanter. The same verb is used by Esau in an unfavourable sense in Gen. xxvii. 36; but Hosea here evidently means to edify his people by

And by his strength he had power with God:
4 Yea, he had power over *the* angel, and prevailed:
He wept, and made supplication unto him:
He found him *in* Beth-el, and there he spake with us;
5 Even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD *is* his memorial.
6 Therefore turn thou to thy God:
Keep mercy and judgment,
And wait on thy God continually.

the allusion. Observe that Jacob is described as the head and representative of his family (comparing this with *v.* 2).

had power with God] Rather, **contended with God.** He alludes to Gen. xxxii. 25 (Jehovistic), 'Israel' being explained (rightly or wrongly) as 'God's combatant'. The word used for God is *elōhīm*, which is applicable to any divine or superhuman form (comp. 1 Sam. xxviii. 13). Hence in the next verse we find 'angel', or, rendering etymologically, 'administrator' (*mal'akh*), substituted for it, to prevent misunderstanding. Comp. Gen. xvi. 10, 13, xlviii. 15, 16; Ex. xiii. 21 and xiv. 19.

4. *he had power over*] Rather, **he contended with.**

he wept, &c.] (The subject is Jacob, not the angel.) This feature is not given in Gen. xxxii.; it is however well adapted to the hortatory object of Hosea. The Septuagint has, 'they wept', &c.

he found him in Beth-el] (The subject is Jehovah.) Two visions of Jacob's are recorded in explanation of the name Bethel (Gen. xxviii. 10—22, xxxv. 9—15). They proceed from different documents, and either of them may have been current in the circle to which Hosea belonged. The latter passage is of problematic origin. The Septuagint strangely has, 'They found me in the house of On' (i.e. Aven or Beth-aven instead of Bethel, comp. iv. 15).

there he spake with us] i.e. 'in the loins of Jacob' (Horsley, &c.); comp. the twofold use of 'Israel' in *vv.* 12, 13. But this spoils the consistency of the historical picture. The Peshito, Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, and probably the Septuagint (*πρὸς αὐτούς*), read **with him**, i.e. with Jacob. (This is better than assimilating the pronoun in the preceding clause, with a few Hebrew MSS.)

5. *Even the LORD God of hosts*, &c.] The Hebrew runs more abruptly, 'And Jehovah' &c., i.e. 'and the name of Him who spoke with Jacob is Jehovah.' 'Jehovah' to the prophets conveys the ideas of almightiness, unchangeableness, and faithfulness (comp. Isa. xli. 4; Mal. iii. 6). 'God of Hosts' is a title specially characteristic of the regal period; the hosts were (1) the stars, (2) the armies of Israel (see the commentators on Isa. i. 24).

his memorial] i.e. his name; comp. Ex. iii. 15 'This is my memorial unto all generations.'

6. *Therefore turn thou to thy God*] Lit., 'And thou—return thou *in* thy God'; i.e., such being the character of God, who lets Himself be won by wrestling prayer, return thou to thy God, and rest in Him.

He is a merchant, the balances of deceit *are* in his hand: 7
He loveth to oppress.
And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found 8
me out substance:
In all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that
were sin.
And I *that am* the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt 9

(For this condensed expression there is no exact parallel.) And how is this 'return' or repentance to have its reality proved? By thine observance of the rules of blended justice and kindness towards man and trustfulness towards God (comp. Mic. vi. 8).

8—15. Not Israel, but Canaan should he be called; for his ideal is Canaan's. The end justifies the means, and his end is—to become rich! But how bitterly will he be disappointed. He must in short begin his history over again, and repeat his wilderness-wanderings. Or to speak more plainly, idolatry must be rooted out. Jehovah must take up the challenge thrown down by Ephraim. Just before the severe final rebuke, Hosea resumes his appeal to the instructive history of Jacob; but verses 12, 13 may be misplaced.

7. *He is a merchant*, &c.] Rather, **Canaan! in his hand are deceitful balances; he loveth to extort.** The geographical term 'Canaan' simply means 'lowland', and therefore might be, and was, applied to Phœnicia (Isa. xxiii. 11) as well as to other lowland parts of Palestine; 'Canaanite' too became a synonym for 'merchant' (Job xli. 6; Prov. xxxi. 24, comp. Zeph. i. 11; Ezek. xvii. 4), as 'Chaldean' was a synonym for 'astrologer.' Hosea uses the word collectively and metaphorically:—his 'Canaan' is a degenerate Israel. The sarcasm derives its point from the low repute of the Phœnician merchants for honesty (comp. *Odyss.* XIV. 290, 291).

8. *And Ephraim said...*] Better, **Ephraim indeed said, Surely I have become rich, I have gotten me wealth: all my profits shall bring me no iniquity that were a sin.** Ephraim congratulates himself on his riches, and with callous conscience maintains that they have been won quite honestly; or if he be not absolutely innocent, yet his few trifling lapses will not be reckoned a sin. He reminds us of the mercenary shepherds in Zech. xi. 5, who say 'Blessed be Jehovah that I become rich.' There is a better connexion however with the next verse if we adopt one or two slight emendations, and render the latter part thus, **(but) all his profits will not suffice for** (i.e. **to expiate**) **the guilt which he has incurred,** i.e. though he gave them all up as 'a ransom for his soul' (Ex. xxx. 12), the sacrifice would be inadequate. Comp. the Septuagint, *πάντες οἱ πόνοι αὐτοῦ οὐχ εὑρεθήσονται αὐτῷ δι' ἀδικίας ἃς ἥμαρτεν.* We thus get rid of the unnatural distinction supposed above between 'iniquity' and 'sin.'

9. *And I*] Rather, **For I.** It is explanatory of the vague hint of an inexorable doom.

thy God from the land of Egypt] Who is therefore ever ready to

Will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as *in* the days of the solemn feast.

10 I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions,
And used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets.

11 *Is there* iniquity *in* Gilead? surely they are vanity:

help you (Isa. xlvi. 3), but who will also, if necessary, punish you as He did of old (comp. Num. xiv. 26—30).

will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles] Rather, **will again make thee to dwell in tents.** The analogy of a parallel passage (ii. 14) at once suggests the idea that this prediction is a threat and not (as St Jerome, Kimchi, and Calvin would have it) a promise. Not indeed a threat without a tinge of promise (see on ii. 14), but the unrelieved worldliness of the speech in *v.* 9 calls forth a declaration of God's purpose as uncompromising in its earnestness. 'Again' alludes to the journey through the wilderness. On the rendering *yet*, see further note in Introduction, part v.

as in the days of the solemn feast] Better, **of the festal season.** The word used is *mō'ēd* (lit. appointed time), which is used rather more widely than *khag* 'festival.' Here however the prophet does mean one of the three ancient festivals, viz. the so-called Feast of Tabernacles (or rather, Booths). This was the most popular of all the feasts (see on ix. 1): it was originally a time of rejoicing for the 'ingathering' (whence its name in Ex. xxiii. 16) of the latest crops of the year, and the 'booths' or 'tents' (compare 2 Sam. xi. 11) were simply designed (precisely as at the analogous festivals of other nations) to promote the enjoyment of the simple-minded rural merrymakers. Another object is indeed ascribed to the festival in the Book of Leviticus, viz. to remind the Israelites of the tent-life of their fathers in the wilderness, but this, as Mr Clark and others have well shown (see *Speaker's Commentary* on Lev. xxiii. 43), can only have been an after-thought, as the nomad Israelites are never said to have dwelt in 'booths' or 'huts', but always in 'tents' (of skin or cloth). Hosea's reference to the Feast of Booths points a striking contrast. The predominant tone of the Israelites is now one of exuberant joyousness (ix. 1), culminating in the merry, out-of-door life of the local autumn-festivals, but soon they shall dwell in tents again, not for amusement, but by bitter compulsion.

10. It is not for want of warnings that this calamity comes upon the Israelites. In the most various ways has Jehovah spoken, not *to*, but **by the prophets.**

Visions...similitudes] A prophetic vision is, properly speaking, an intuition of some divinely revealed truth clothed in 'outward and visible signs', but the term is also extended (e.g. Isa. i. 1; Obad. 1; Nah. i. 1) to the entire contents of a prophecy. 'Similitudes', i.e. parables whether implicit (as ix. 10) or explicit (as vii. 4—7; Isa. v. 1—7).

11. The ruin of two famous centres of idolatry, representing together the entire northern kingdom.

Is there iniquity, &c.] More probably, **If Gilead is (given to) idola-**

They sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal;
Yea, their altars *are* as heaps in the furrows of the fields.
And Jacob fled *into* the country of Syria, 12
And Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept *sheep*.

try, mere vanity shall they (the Gileadites) become, i.e. apostacy from Him who is the only source of life leads to sure destruction; 'they that make the idols become like unto them.' The town of Gilead has already been singled out for reprobation in vi. 8, 9. For the historical fulfilment of the prophecy, see 2 Kings xv. 29—'in the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and took...Gilead and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria' (compare Tiglath-Pileser's own account of his expedition against Philistia in B.C. 734; G. Smith, *Eponym Canon*, p. 123, Schrader, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, on 2 Kings xv. 29).

they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal] Or, as it might well be stated in the margin, 'in Heap-town' (see next note). They affront Jehovah by sacrificing at idolatrous shrines, especially at Gilgal (see on iv. 15). So the Targum. Others, by a slight emendation, 'they sacrifice to the bullocks in Gilgal', i.e. to the steer-gods; but there is no parallel for such a use of the word 'bullocks.' St Jerome's 'bobus immolantes' is an ungrammatical rendering of our present text (see his note).

yea, their altars are as heaps, &c.] Rather, **so then their altars shall be as stone-heaps,** i.e. like heaps of stones which a careful husbandman has gathered out of his ploughed field (comp. Mic. i. 6). The idiom employed (lit., 'also their altars' &c.) indicates the correspondence between cause and effect, a sin and its retribution (comp. Isa. lxvi. 3 *b*, 4 *a*); the tense is the prophetic perfect. There is a paronomasia in Gilgal (as if 'Heap-town', comp. Josh. iv. 20), and *gallim* ('heaps'); the very name of Gilgal seems to suggest its impending fate. Some think the name 'Gilead' is also included in the paronomasia, but in spite of the apparent support of Gen. xxxi. 47, 48, this is not the more natural view of Hosea's language. At most, there is a play upon the similarity of sound in Gilead and Gilgal; not upon any supposed similarity of meaning.

12, 13. As Ewald remarks, 'this is probably the oldest instance of a spiritualizing of the ancient history, though the way to it had been long prepared by the conception, so familiar to Hosea himself (chaps. i.—iii.), of the community of Israel as Jehovah's bride.' The verses however come in very abruptly, and are really, as Rashi long ago observed, a continuation of the didactic survey of the life of Jacob interrupted at *v.* 6 (comp. on ver. 14).

12. *fled into the country of Syria*] Comp. Gen. xxvii. 43, xxviii. 2. Hosea's phrase, **the field of Aram,** is the exact equivalent of 'Padan-Aram' (rather Paddan-Aram) in the latter passage; the Assyrian *padânu* has for one of its meanings 'field' (also 'park').

served for a wife, &c.] Comp. Gen. xxix. 18—20, xxx. 31, xxxi.

13 And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt,
And by a prophet was he preserved.
14 Ephraim provoked *him* to anger most bitterly:
Therefore shall he leave his blood upon him,
And his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.
13 When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted *himself* in
Israel;

38—41. The last passage gives a vivid idea of the hardships summed up in the simple phrase 'he kept (sheep).'

13. *by a prophet*] i. e. Moses (comp. Deut. xxxiv. 10). Hosea contrasts the helplessness and the hardships of Jacob-Israel with the wonderful deliverance and preservation of his descendants. Comp. Isa. li. 2, 'I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.' Note the double use of the term Israel in *v.* 12 and *v.* 13.

14. This verse would be less abrupt if it immediately followed *v.* 11, of which it might be taken to furnish a fuller justification.

provoked] Rather, **hath provoked.**

therefore shall he leave his blood] Rather, **and his bloodshed will he cast**; i. e. Jehovah will bring sudden retribution upon him for his bloodguiltiness (comp. i. 4, iv. 2).

his reproach] i.e., the insult to Jehovah in Israel's idolatry (comp. Isa. lxv. 7).

CHAP. XIII.

1—8. Israel signed his own death-warrant when he lapsed into Baal-worship. Foolish as it is to 'kiss calves', they persist in the practice. Therefore the nation can but drift away, like cloud, or chaff, or smoke. How little Jehovah deserves such treatment! But Israel's destruction has already begun: they shall be torn piecemeal.

1. *When Ephraim spake trembling*, &c.] The Hebrew is difficult, and the soundness of the text is perhaps questionable. At any rate, the rendering will depend on one's impression of the requirements of the context. To the present writer, no translation appears preferable to that of King James's Bible, and he has a pleasure in finding himself in accord with this version, which must of necessity rarely be the case in obscure passages. The single objection to the rendering is that expressed by Mr Huxtable in the *Speaker's Commentary*, viz. that it 'would give to the tribe of Ephraim a character out of harmony alike with Hosea's description of it in v. 5 and with the history.' But the passage referred to requires to be explained differently, and as to the history of the tribe, we are not here concerned with the facts as viewed critically, but as they presented themselves to a preacher in search of edification. Hosea has once already pointed the people of Israel to the golden age of the past, when Israel as a whole was comparable to 'grapes in the wilderness' and 'the firstripe in the fig tree' (ix. 10, see note); he conceives of Jehovah as kindly overlooking the human frailty

But when he offended in Baal, he died.
And now they sin more and more,
And have made them molten images of their silver,
And idols according to their own understanding,
All of it the work of the craftsmen:

of his child in consideration of Israel's latent possibilities. 'When Ephraim spake trembling', &c., may therefore be expanded thus, 'When the Ephraimites in trembling accents responded to the divine call (comp. ii. 15), they rose to the exalted position which its prophetic ancestor foreshadowed (Gen. xlix. 22—26).' The reference is partly to the leadership of the Ephraimite Joshua, partly to the prosperity which attended the tribe of Ephraim even when it no longer supplied a general, a judge, or a king to the entire nation. The other chief renderings are, 'When Ephraim spake, [there was] terror', &c., i.e., men listened to Ephraim with fear and trembling; and, 'When Ephraim spake of revolt (?), [and] lifted itself up [as a rebel] in Israel', continuing in the next clause, 'it became guilty through Baal, and died.' In the latter case, the reference is to the revolt of the Ten Tribes, and the public sanction then given to a retrograde religion. The advantage of this view is that it enables us to give precisely the same meaning to Ephraim in both parts of *v.* 1; but as the text stands, the writer feels unable to accept it, as the sense of 'revolt' cannot be justified. It is very possible that the text is corrupt.

but when he offended in Baal, he died] Rather, if the Authorized Version's view of the meaning be retained, **but he became guilty through the Baal, and died.** That is, in course of time, the Ten Tribes severed themselves definitely from the progressive teaching of the higher spiritual prophecy, and by so doing sealed their doom as a nation. The Baal-worship spoken of is not the form of religion against which Elijah thundered; that was introduced from Phœnicia, whereas a simpler but still idolatrous worship was offered by the northern Israelites to Jehovah under the name of 'Baal' (see on ii. 13, 16). Finding a multitude of Canaanitish sacred places dedicated each to its own 'Baal' or patron-deity, they forthwith identified this Baal with their own Jehovah, and so fell under the same condemnation as their heathen predecessors. They failed to go forward with Amos and Hosea, and so they could not but fall behind to a degenerate and lower type of religion.

died] Ephraim was 'dead while he lived' (1 Tim. v. 6, comp. Prov. ix. 18, and Dante, *Inferno* XXXIII. 139—157). So Gen. ii. 17, 'in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' Till Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, there was the hope that, though not created immortal, he might yet be exempted from decay and death. So, till Ephraim deliberately corrupted his religion, there was always the possibility that God might recognize him as a permanent factor in the religious history of the world. Comp. on v. 12.

2. *And now*, &c.] The present race is no better; they go on adding to their guilt.

idols according to their own understanding] Sarcastically. Sept.,

They say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.

3 Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud,
And as the early dew that passeth away,
As the chaff *that* is driven with a whirlwind out of the floor,

Targ., Vulg., however, read 'according to the pattern of idols' (there could be no art, then, in these repetitions of archaic images).

they say of them, &c.] This part of the verse is very difficult; it will be best to clear up first the meaning of the closing words. There are two rival renderings, 'sacrificers of men, they kiss calves' (so substantially the Sept., the Vulg., Rashi, Aben Ezra, Calvin, Horsley, Kuenen), and **human sacrificers, they kiss calves** (so Kimchi and many moderns). Either rendering implies a strong touch of sarcasm. In the first case, it is the strange perversity of slaying men and kissing calves which the prophet lashes; in the second, the affront to human reason in doing homage to dumb animals. The objection to the former explanation is the fact that human sacrifices were not, so far as we know, offered to the calf- or rather steer-gods, and indeed were hardly common in the land of Israel before the time of Ahaz (2 Kings xvi. 3). Besides, would the prophet have referred to such abominable cruelty in such a casual way, more, as has been well said, in a vein of satire than of indignation? Now let us turn to the opening words of the sentence. The parallelism in this and the following verse is so thoroughly carried out, that for symmetry's sake we can hardly help rendering, **unto such** [the idols] **do they speak.** The sarcasm is as manifest here as in the following words; what can be more absurd than to address vows and prayers to the worshippers' own handiwork, to things 'which have mouths, and speak not.' The objection is, that the meaning 'speak' is not a common one for *'āmar* (properly 'to say'), but Ps. iv. 5 shows that the verb in question may be used absolutely, even in classical Hebrew. It is possible however that there is a corruption, and that we should read, for instance, for 'speak' (or 'say'), 'burn incense.'

kiss] 'Kiss', viz. as a sign of adoration or homage, by a transition like that in the usage of προσκυνέω. So whenever (*a*) idols, or (*b*) supposed divine beings, or (*c*) kings are referred to; comp. (*a*) 1 Kings xix. 18, (*b*) Job xxxi. 27, (*c*) Ps. ii. 12 (Gen. xli. 40; 1 Sam. x. 1 can hardly be quoted here). The 'kiss' of adoration consisted sometimes, as in Job *l.c.*, in kissing the hand towards the idol (comp. προσκυνέω again). But the heathen Arabs literally kissed the black stone at Mecca; they were wont to *stroke* their domestic idols.

the calves] i.e., the small images of an ox, such as are referred to in 1 Kings xii. 28.

3. *the early dew*, &c.] Rather, **the night-mist that early passeth away.** See on vi. 4.

as the chaff...the floor] A familiar figure, but here expressed with more fulness than usual. The point of it is partly in the elevated

And as the smoke out of the chimney.
Yet I *am* the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, 4
And thou shalt know no god but me:
For *there is* no saviour beside me.
I did know thee in the wilderness, 5
In the land of great drought.
According to their pasture, so were they filled; 6
They were filled, and their heart was exalted;
Therefore have they forgotten me.
Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: 7
As a leopard by the way will I observe *them:*

situation of 'the floor' (comp. 1 Sam. xix. 22 Sept.; 2 Sam. xxiv. 18; 2 Chr. iii. 1), partly in the suddenness of the whirlwinds in Palestine, which start up 'as if by magic or spirit-influence' (Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, p. 154).

chimney] Rather, **lattice.**

4. *Yet I am the LORD thy God*] Hosea persistently refuses to recognize that the god whom the Israelites worship is really Israel's God, Jehovah. The use of an idolatrous symbol has so unspiritualized the object of their worship that the mere retention of the name Jehovah gives them no claim upon Hosea's sympathy. The prophet therefore introduces Jehovah as expostulating with the Israelites for the abandonment of their hereditary religion.

thou shalt know no god but me] Rather, **thou knowest,** &c.; the experience of history bore witness to Jehovah's help, and his alone. Comp. Deut. xxxii. 12. Hosea however does not deny the existence of other gods besides Jehovah; only their equality to Him in power. It was only by degrees that the truth involved in the revelation of Jehovah was fully realized. See Introduction.

5. *I did know*, &c.] Better, **It was I that knew,** &c. 'To know' = 'to take favourable notice of', as Ps. i. 6 and often.

in the land of great drought] Or, 'of burning thirst' (the word occurs nowhere else). Comp. the description in ii. 3.

6. *According to their pasture*, &c.] Rather, **When they fed, they waxed full.** The idea of the verse is that Israel's apostasy sprang from his enjoying God's gifts without thinking of the Giver, comp. ii. 8, iv. 7, x. 1. The expressions were probably prophetic commonplaces; comp. Deut. viii. 11—15, xxxi. 20, xxxii. 15, 18.

7. *I will be*] Rather, **I have become.** The evident decay of Israel as a nation shows that the punishment has begun (see vii. 8—10).

the leopard] Familiar to the Hebrews and Assyrians under the same name (*nāmēr*, *nimru*). Its habit of springing from an ambush is again referred to in Jer. v. 6.

by the way will I observe them] According to another pronunciation of the consonants, the Septuagint, Peshito, and Vulgate (supported by some MSS. and many editions of the Hebrew Bible), render 'in the way

8 I will meet them as a bear *that is* bereaved of her whelps,
And will rent the caul of their heart,
And there will I devour them like a lion:
The wild beast shall tear them.
9 O Israel, *thou* hast destroyed thyself; but in me *is* thine help.

to Assyria', an allusion being supposed to Israel's dallying with the great northern empire (v. 13). So also Hitzig and Ewald. But the prophet has to deal now with the disease itself, not with a mere symptom.

8. *as a bear*] A striking but uncommon comparison. Comp. Lam. iii. 10.

the caul of their heart] Rather, **the enclosure of their heart**, i.e., not the *pericardium*, which is what the Authorized Version appears to have supposed, but the breast.

as a lion] Most render, **as a lioness**; but this is at any rate uncertain. There is nothing as in Job iv. 11 specially to suggest the female. The masculine undoubtedly occurs in Ps. lvii. 5 (Hebr.). The root-idea is probably voracity; but unfortunately there is no cognate in Assyrian. The numerous words for lion in Hebrew are so troublesome to express in English, as the translators of the Sept. found them in Greek (Sept. here has *σκύμνοι δρυμοῦ*).

9—15. An alternation of cries expressive of the contending thoughts and emotions of the tender-hearted but truthful prophet. The punishment is inevitable; yea, it is begun. Yet—if Israel would only repent! Indeed, his Father must interpose. And yet, on the other hand, rebellion must be punished.

9. Hosea, 'in the spirit', sees the future as if it were past. Hence the use of the perfect.

O Israel, &c.] This rendering agrees with that of the Jewish commentator, Rashi (similarly the Targum). It belongs to a numerous series of attempts (see Poole's *Synopsis ad loc.*) to explain one of Hosea's most abrupt sentences. The text, as it stands, means literally, 'He (or, It) hath destroyed thee, O Israel, because (or, that) on (or, against) me, on (or, against) thy help', that is, as most moderns interpret, **This is thy destruction, O Israel, that to me, to thy helper, (thou hast been unfaithful)**: the abruptness is attributed to the 'labouring voice, interrupted by sobs' (Ewald) of one whose pity is only less strong than his regard for justice. Turning to the versions, we find the Septuagint rendering, *Τῇ διαφθορᾷ σου Ἰσραὴλ τίς βοηθήσει*; the Peshito, 'I have destroyed thee, O Israel; who shall help thee'; the Vulgate, 'Perditio tua, Israel; tantummodo in me auxilium tuum.' As Louis Cappel long ago saw, the slight variation of a single letter implied in the Septuagint and Peshito renderings greatly improves the latter part of the verse. Accepting this, we may render the whole, **'He hath destroyed thee, O Israel; yea, who is thy help?'** By 'Israel' of course Ephraim, i.e. N. Israel, is meant. For the idiom 'in thy help'=invested with the character of a helper, comp. Delitzsch's note

I will be thy king: where *is any other* that may save thee 10
in all thy cities?
And thy judges *of* whom thou saidst, Give me a king and
princes?
I gave thee a king in mine anger, 11
And took *him away* in my wrath.
The iniquity of Ephraim *is* bound up; his sin *is* hid. 12
The sorrows of a travailing *woman* shall come upon him: 13
He *is* an unwise son;

on Ps. xxxv. 2. The alternative is to suppose that a word has dropped out of the text. Ewald's explanation (above) is forced.

I will be thy king, &c.] Rather, **Where, now, is thy king, that he may save thee in all thy cities?** The prophet looks a little way before him to the fulfilment of the predictions in x. 14 ('all thy fortresses') and xi. 6 ('his cities').

thy judges] The 'judges' appear to be synonymous (comp. vii. 7) with 'king and princes', who, of course, in Israel as well as in Judah (Jer. xxi. 11, 12) shared the judicial functions. See on iii. 4, viii. 12.

Give me a king] Some compare 1 Sam. viii. 5 (of Saul), but Hosea is not opposed to royalty in itself. See next note.

11. *I gave thee*, &c.] Rather, **I give thee kings** [lit., a king] **in mine anger, and take (them) away in my wrath.** The reference is to the elevation of Jeroboam I., but also to the various dynasties which from time to time forced their way to the throne (comp. on vii. 7). Indulged self-will brought with it its own punishment—hardening of the heart in apostasy. Thus our passage seems to mediate between the two different views of Jeroboam's act presented to us in i. 11 (see note) and 1 Kings xi. 29—39 respectively. In one sense Jehovah 'gave'; in another, he 'gave' not.

12. But this instability of government is not Israel's full punishment.

bound up] Tied up as in a bag (comp. Job xiv. 17).

hid] Rather, **laid by in store** (as Job xxi. 19).

13, 14. These verses, at least down to the last clause of *v.* 14, seem a slight digression. The prophet declares that the troubles which are already closing around Israel, are in reality a last opportunity graciously vouchsafed of repentance. But he in his unwisdom neglects to embrace it, though every moment of delay increases his danger. Notice the twofold application of the figure of childbirth. Israel is first of all the travailing woman, and then the child whose birth is imperilled by its weak will. Mr Huxtable well compares the abruptness with which St Paul shifts the application of an image; see e.g. 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3, and 13—15.

The sorrows...shall come] Rather, **The pangs...come** (are in the process of coming). The divine judgment is compared to the pangs of trouble, as in Mic. iv. 9; Matt. xxiv. 8; 1 Thess. v. 3.

he is an unwise son] Comp. Deut. xxxii. 6, 'Do ye thus requite Jehovah, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father', &c.

For he should not stay long in *the place of* the breaking
forth of children.

14 I will ransom them from the power of the grave;
I will redeem them from death:
O death, I will be thy plagues;
O grave, I will be thy destruction:
Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

for he should not, &c.] Or better, 'for at the (right) time he standeth not', &c. But as the rendering 'at the (right) time' is doubtful, it is better still to alter the points (as in Ezek. xxvii. 34) and render, **for now he standeth not in the place where children break forth.** The passage is akin to Isa. xxxvii. 2, where Judah's utter incapacity to emerge out of its troubles is compared to the inability of a woman to perform the act of bringing forth. Here, however, to suggest a moral lesson to Israel, the weak will of the child is represented as the cause of the failure. It is a new birth which Israel needs; and if calamity only had its right effect on the conscience, the language ascribed to Israel in vi. 2 would be verified, 'on the third day...we shall live in his sight.' For the two-fold aspect in which Hosea here views the judgment, comp. vi. 1.

14. But a father cannot long endure to contemplate the prospect of his child's ruin.

from the power of the grave...from death] Rather, **from the hand of Sheôl...from Death.** Sheól and Death are used synonymously for the nether world (as in Isa. xxviii. 15; Ps. vi. 5, xlix. 14). In Isa. v. 14 Sheól has an enormous mouth; so here a hand.

O death...destruction] So Gesenius, following the Targum and Vulgate. But, as Dr Pusey remarks, on this view of the construction, we must render 'I would be thy plagues', &c., whereas the context requires an absolute declaration. Render therefore, **Where are thy plagues, O Sheôl? where thy pestilence, O Death?** (Comp. Ps. xci. 6 Hebr.). 'The plagues are the *mille viæ leti*, the many kinds of sickness, the most terrible of which is called "the firstborn of Death", Job xviii. 13 (Hitzig). Though all the plagues which fill the dark city of Sheól were let loose upon Israel as a nation, they would be incapable of destroying Jehovah's 'son.' St Paul quotes these words (1 Cor. xv. 55) in a translation of his own either as proving the doctrine of the Resurrection, or simply as well expressing his own triumphant feelings. Triumphant the tone of Hosea's words certainly is, and hence some have thought Jehovah calls for the pestilences as agents in Israel's threatened destruction, taking the first part of the verse interrogatively, 'From the hand of Sheól should I ransom them? from Death should I redeem them?' But this is not the most natural explanation, nor is it required on the above view of the context.

repentance shall be hid] Rather, **repentance is hid.** Perhaps an assurance of the irrevocable nature of the promise. But as the tone of promise is so transient, it seems better to take this clause in connexion with the threat of judgment in *v.* 12 of which indeed it may possibly

Though he be fruitful among *his* brethren, 15
An east wind shall come, the wind of the LORD *shall* come up from the wilderness,
And his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up:
He shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels.
Samaria shall become desolate; 16
For she hath rebelled against her God:
They shall fall by the sword:
Their infants shall be dashed in pieces,
And their women with child shall be ript up.

once have formed the third member. At any rate, we need a resumption of threatening here, to prepare the way for the stern announcement in *v.* 15.

15. *Though he be fruitful*, &c.] Rather, **For though he bear fruit**, &c. Evidently there is an allusion to the meaning of the word Ephraim ('fruitfulness'?); for another see xiv. 8. The verse carries on the idea of the last clause of the previous verse. 'In fact, though his name and his nature indicate fruitfulness, yet a remorselessly severe punishment shall come upon him.' His 'brethren' are his fellow tribes, which are compared to trees. There is another reading (*'âkhîm* for *'akhîm*) 'among reed-plants', comp. Gen. xli. 2, 18. This is adopted by Delitzsch, and has considerable Rabbinic authority (e.g. that of Rashi and Abulwalîd), but is found in extremely few extant manuscripts. It certainly completes the figure, but is philologically difficult.

the wind of the LORD, &c.] Rather, **a wind of Jehovah, coming up from the desert.** The parching and destructive east or south-east wind is referred to, which blew from the desert (comp. Jer. iv. 11, xiii. 24; Job i. 19). It is a figure for the Assyrian conqueror (somewhat as Isa. xxi. 1), who at the end of the verse comes forward in his undisguised awfulness.

spring] Rather perhaps, **reservoir.**

he shall spoil] 'He' is emphatically expressed; 'he' whom the east wind figures 'shall spoil' (or, plunder).

pleasant vessels] Rather, **precious vessels** (whether jewels, or objects of worked gold or silver, or rarities of any kind).

16. *become desolate*] Rather, **be dealt with as guilty** (as x. 2).

their infants, &c.] Rather, **their children** (those of an age to play, comp. Jer. vi. 11, ix. 20). The same barbarities were predicted in x. 14. Such a fate would be simply retributive justice (see 2 Kings xv. 16).

CHAPTER XIV.

Already the future of northern Israel has been irradiated for Hosea by short gleams of hope (xi. 8—11, xiii. 14); now at length hope becomes victorious over fear. True, Israel has not yet 'returned', and Hosea is

14 O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God;
For thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.
2 Take with you words, and turn to the LORD:
Say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive *us* graciously:
So will we render the calves of our lips.
3 Asshur shall not save us: we will not ride upon horses:
Neither will we say any more to the work of our hands,
Ye are our gods:

obliged to repeat his exhortation. But he evidently feels persuaded that Israel cannot resist the lovely promises of which in this chapter he is the bearer. Verses 1—3 contain an imaginative expression of the feelings by which the Israelites will one day be animated (contrast vi. 1—3).

1. *return...for thou hast fallen*] To 'stumble' or to 'fall' means to be visited by a calamity (as iv. 3, v. 5). Experience has shown the Israelites, to quote Jeremiah (ii. 19), 'what an evil and bitter thing it is to forsake Jehovah their God.'

2. *Take with you words*] It is one of the most undoubtedly ancient of the religious laws of the Pentateuch that 'none shall appear before Jehovah empty' (Ex. xxiii. 15, xxxiv. 20). What gift then will be most acceptable from the Israelites to their heavenly King? The answer that will naturally rise to the lips of a half-converted Israelite will be 'sacrifice and burnt-offering' (see note on v. 6); but the prophet in his present mood cherishes the belief that Israel's repentance will after all not be as superficial as he once feared (contrast v. 6). He therefore urges his people, after the bitter lessons of experience, to take as their offering, not cattle, but penitent words spoken out of the abundance of the heart.

Take away all iniquity] Rather, **Altogether forgive iniquity.** The form of the Hebrew is singular, but not unparalleled.

receive us graciously] Rather, **accept the good**; 'for it is good to sing praises unto our God' (Ps. cxlvii. 1).

render the calves of our lips] Or, 'pay (as if with) bullocks (with) our lips.' Thus the Israelites are converted at last to the principle of chap. vi. ver. 6. It is a very strange expression, however, and Archbishop Newcome may be right in preferring the reading of the Septuagint (comp. Heb. xiii. 15), **pay the fruit of our lips**, which is a choice Hebrew phrase (Isa. lvii. 19). The 'fruit' is of course praise and thanksgiving, or vows of obedience (Ps. l. 13, 14, lxix. 30, 31).

3. Israel here renounces those sins against the theocracy of which Jehovah's prophet had specially accused him, viz. trust in Assyria (v. 13, vii. 11, viii. 9) and reliance on horses and chariots (i. 7, x. 13, alluding no doubt to the Egyptian alliance, comp. Isa. xxx. 16, xxxi. 1), and idolatry (iv. 17, viii. 4).

to the work of our hands] An early anticipation of the splendid morsels of irony, in which a later prophet lashes idolatry (see Isa. xlii. 17, liv. 17).

For in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.
I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: 4
For mine anger is turned away from him.
I will be as the dew unto Israel: 5
He shall grow as the lily,
And cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

the fatherless] Israel's condition is compared to that of an orphan (comp. the exquisite *ὀρφανούς* of John xiv. 18).

4—9. Jehovah, in answer, describes the blessings which He will give. The imagery reminds us of the Song of Songs; notice especially the references to the lily and to Lebanon.

4. *their backsliding*] i.e. the damage which their 'backsliding' has brought upon them.

love them freely] Or, 'spontaneously', i.e. without receiving any gifts but those mentioned in *v.* 2.

5. *I will be as the dew*] Rather, **as the night-mist,** i.e. the masses of vapour (Hebr. *tal*) brought by the damp westerly winds of summer (see on vi. 4). 'In the strict scientific sense of the word, this is rain, and not dew at all, since the vapour becomes condensed in the air before touching the ground' (Neil, *Palestine Explored*, p. 135). The promise comes very appropriately after the 'I will heal' of *v.* 4. The baleful effects of the sirocco are often felt in Palestine during the rainless heat of summer, but by the beautiful provision of night-mist all hardy forms of vegetable life are preserved. But to the 'east-wind' described in xiii. 15 there was no such counteracting force. A 'dew' ('night-mist') of supernatural energy (like Gideon's) was required to vivify that which Assyria had destroyed—what another prophet calls (Isa. xxvi. 19) 'a dew of lights', i.e. an influence from the divine Light, could alone undo so complete a catastrophe. Observe how nearly coincident are the conceptions of land and people in Hosea's mind (see on ii. 3).

grow [**blossom**] *as the lily*] So Ecclus. xxxix. 14. The image suggests the ideas of profusion and beauty. There is nothing to bind us down to any single individual of the lily species. Indeed, the application of the Hebrew *shōshan* was probably as wide as that of the Arabic *sūsan* still is, if we may argue from the mention of 'lilies [oleanders?] by the rivers of waters' in Ecclus. l. 8. Dr Thomson's 'Hûleh lily', which abounds in the woods north of Tabor (*The Land and the Book*, p. 256), is at least as likely a flower to be meant as any other. Dr Tristram prefers the not less gorgeous than abundant *Anemone coronaria* (*Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 464).

and cast forth] Lit., 'and let it strike.' A change of the verbal form for the sake of colour and variety.

as Lebanon] The slender roots of the lily supply no fit image for stability; for this Hosea turns to the 'cedars of God' (Ps. lxxx. 10, A. V. 'goodly cedars'), or perhaps he means the mountains of Lebanon themselves (for the 'roots' of a mountain, comp. Job xxviii. 9).

6 His branches shall spread,
And his beauty shall be as the olive tree,
And his smell as Lebanon.
7 They that dwell under his shadow shall return;
They shall revive *as* the corn, and grow as the vine:
The sent thereof *shall be* as the wine of Lebanon.
8 Ephraim *shall say*, What have I to do any more with idols?

6. *His branches shall spread*] For 'branches' render **saplings**. It is the same word as in Isa. liii. 2 (where A. V. 'tender branch'). There the prophet's idea is that after Israel's vine has been cut down, a slender plant will spring up from the root; here, that the root of the living tree shall send forth many fresh plants. In fact, Israel is to be like not merely a tree, but a garden.

as the olive-tree] Beautiful doubtless in itself, but with a beauty enhanced by the serviceableness of the fruits. Jeremiah compares Israel to 'a fresh-green olive-tree, fair, and of goodly fruit' (Jer. xi. 16).

his smell as Lebanon] As the balsamic odour of the cedars and of aromatic shrubs. Comp. Cant. iv. 11.

7. *They that dwell...as the corn*] Rather, **Once more shall they that dwell under his shadow bring corn to life** (i.e. in prosaic language, cultivate corn). A contrast to the lamentation for the corn in vii. 14. 'His shadow', i.e. Israel's; Jehovah is presumably still the speaker. For the idea, comp. Jer. xxxi. 5, 12.

grow [**blossom**] *as the vine*] There is a transition from the prosperity of the agriculture to that of the people who live by it, as in Ps. lxxii. 16.

the sent thereof] Rather, **his** [i.e. Israel's] **renown** (lit. his memorial or name). For the comparison which follows, comp. Cant. i. 3, 'Thy name is as ointment poured forth.'

as the wine of Lebanon] The vine is still largely cultivated in every part of Lebanon. But the finest grapes in Syria are those of Helbon, a village in the Antilibanus district, a little to the north of Damascus, precisely as in the days of Ezekiel (xxvii. 18) and Nebuchadnezzar (Lenormant, *Étude sur quelques parties des syllabaires cunéiformes*, Par. 1876, p. 123).

8. *Ephraim* (*shall say*), *What have I to do any more with idols*] So the Targum and the Syriac. The objection is that the ellipsis is unique, and hence Archbishop Secker proposed to follow the Septuagint (reading *lo* for *li*), and render, **Ephraim—what hath he to do**, &c. Prof. Robertson Smith is dissatisfied with this, but his objection simply is that the third member of the verse is unsuitable in the mouth of Jehovah, the evergreen tree being 'in Semitic symbolism the image of receptivity, of divinely nourished life, not of quickening power' (*The Prophets of Israel*, p. 411). But why should the whole verse be given

I have heard *him*, and observed him:
I *am* like a green fir tree.
From me is thy fruit found.
Who *is* wise, and he shall understand these *things?* 9
Prudent, and he shall know them?
For the ways of the LORD *are* right,

to the same speaker, especially if we reject the idea that the prefixed Ephraim indicates Israel as the speaker? It is surely very difficult to assign the fourth member to Israel, as if it meant that Ephraim or Israel bore fruit to Jehovah. On the whole, it seems best to adopt the Septuagint reading, and to assign all but the third member of the verse to Jehovah. There is a special force in the restoration of the name Ephraim, if we look at the closing words of the verse. [Pusey and before him the Lutheran divine Manger assign the four lines of which the verse consists alternately to Ephraim and Jehovah.]

I have heard him and observed him] Rather, **I respond and look on him.** The pronoun is emphatically expressed—'I on my part.' 'Respond' reminds us of ii. 15, 21, 22. The idea is that Jehovah's treatment of Israel corresponds to Israel's treatment of him (comp. Ps. xviii. 25, 26). 'To look upon' anyone is to be favourable to him (Ps. lxxxiv. 9, cxix. 132); the opposite is 'to hide the face from' (Ps. xxii. 24, xxvii. 9).

I am like a green fir tree] The precise kind of tree meant by *b'rōsh* is uncertain; but Hosea, as a N. Israelite, is evidently thinking of the splendid forests of Lebanon. Most have supposed a reference to the sherbin-tree, a small kind of cypress resembling the cedar; Tristram prefers the Aleppo pine, a tree quite as characteristic of Lower Lebanon as the cedar. Certainly it is very alien to the spirit of the prophets to compare Jehovah to a tree (comp. iv. 13; Isa. i. 29). Keil refers to the 'tree of life'; but even this is never identified with Jehovah (though Sept. identifies it with Israel, Isa. lxv. 22). Is not this short clause a naïve self-gratulation on the part of Israel? Here, as in the previous clause, the personal pronoun is expressed.

From me is thy fruit found] Israel cannot be the speaker here (see above). The clause contains a warning for Israel in his prosperity not to forget the Giver. Probably there is a play upon the name Ephraim 'fruitfulness' (as in xiii. 15).

9. An epilogue or conclusion to the prophecy, unspecializing it, as it were, and extracting, cf. Ps. cvii. 43, the moral which underlies it all. The tone and language of it remind us of the Book of Proverbs (Prov. xi. 5, xv. 19). The term 'the righteous' occurs nowhere else in Hosea.

Who is wise, &c.] Rather, **Whoso is wise, let him understand these things** (i.e. the foregoing prophecies). One great mark of 'wisdom' in the Old Testament sense was a rational acquiescence in the equity of the providential government.

for the ways of the LORD, &c.] The 'ways of Jehovah' are those

And the just shall walk in them :
But the transgressors shall fall therein.

marked out by Him as Governor of the world for the righteous and for the wicked respectively. These 'ways' are 'straight' or 'right' (synonymous with 'righteous', as Deut. xxxii. 4; Ps. cxix. 37), alike when they spread themselves out in an unbroken level for the pious, and when they oppose themselves in rocky stumbling-blocks to the ungodly. Comp. Prov. xi. 5, xv. 19; Isa. xxvi. 7.

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